

JULIUS HAAST  
TOWARDS A NEW APPRECIATION OF HIS  
LIFE AND WORK

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## Abstract

Little is known about Julius Haast's life prior to his arrival in New Zealand in 1858 at the age of 36. Without knowing something about his background, it is difficult to explain his life in New Zealand. This work pursues a historical context that can more fully explain Haast's remarkably active career in New Zealand. The geological survey of the Canterbury Province, the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury and the Canterbury Museum represent Haast's major contributions to science and culture in New Zealand. Julius Haast carefully engineered his own transition from geologist to museum director within the social and political climate of Canterbury in order to remain in Christchurch where he raised his family. Heinrich von Haast's book about his father has been the accepted source of information about his father since its publication in 1948. Until recently, scholars have failed to explore beyond the scope of von Haast's biography. There is now a trend toward recognising Julius Haast as having made significant contributions to many aspects of science and society.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Julius Haast was Canterbury's Provincial Geologist from 1861 until 1868 when he became Director of the Canterbury Museum, the post he held until his death in 1887. His appointment as geologist was the result of his success in completing the geological survey of the Nelson province begun by Ferdinand Hochstetter.

Throughout his career as a geologist, natural scientist and museum curator in New Zealand, Julius Haast maintained an extensive correspondence with other influential men of science including Ferdinand Hochstetter, Charles Darwin, Joseph Hooker and Richard Owen. The discovery of large deposits of moa bones in Canterbury not only provided the fieldwork necessary for Julius Haast to become the nineteenth century's foremost authority on the moa, but it also provided him with a supply of the rare commodity with which he was able to build up the collections of the Canterbury Museum through exchanges.

He was honoured for his achievements and services to science at regular intervals with degrees, medals, fellowships and knighthoods. His efforts gained for him an international reputation and much of his work was more appreciated in Europe and in Britain; however, Julius Haast became a naturalised British subject, adopted Canterbury as his home and raised his family in Christchurch.

As much information as is given above can be derived from a number of sources. The most complete source is the biography, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast: Explorer, Geologist, Museum Builder*, written by his son, Heinrich von Haast. In her thesis, 'New Zealand Biography in the 1940s and the 1990s: A

Comparative View,' Tessa Molloy notes that before the publication of von Haast's biography in 1948 there were already a number of short biographical sketches on Julius Haast.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to von Haast's self-published book brief notices have appeared in various places including the most readily accessible *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* in which Peter B. Maling's contribution is entirely drawn from von Haast.<sup>2</sup>

An inherent interest in New Zealand's European links has called for another round of writing on Julius Haast as a significant German scientist in New Zealand. Rodney Fisher's chapter on Julius Haast in *The German Connection: New Zealand and German-Speaking Europe in the Nineteenth Century* is also largely based on information gathered from von Haast's book.<sup>3</sup> James Braund includes Haast in his brief survey of German-speaking scientists who have visited or worked in New Zealand. He believes there is still much about Haast's work that can be learned from the numerous articles and letters that he wrote in German.<sup>4</sup> In Germany, Wolfhart Langer has researched Julius Haast's life prior to his migration to New Zealand and clarifies or corrects some of the vague information in the von Haast biography.<sup>5</sup>

Molloy identifies Heinrich von Haast's twofold purpose in writing the book about his father: 'The biography commemorates a life devoted to scientific research and education, and the contribution Haast made to the forces building a new community...'<sup>6</sup> He drew attention to the monumental task that his father took upon

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<sup>1</sup> Tessa Molloy, 'New Zealand Biography in the 1940s and the 1990s: A Comparative View' (MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2004), pp. 27-8.

<sup>2</sup> Peter B. Maling, 'Johann Franz Julius von Haast,' in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 1 (Wellington, 1990), pp. 167-9.

<sup>3</sup> Rodney Fisher, 'Sir Julius von Haast' in James N. Bade, ed., *The German Connection: New Zealand and German-Speaking Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 145-51.

<sup>4</sup> James Braund, 'German-Speaking Scientists in New Zealand 1773-1951: Research Past, Present and Future,' *European Studies* 21 (2005), pp. 179-81.

<sup>5</sup> Wolfhart Langer, 'Der Bonner Neuseelandforscher Sir Johann Franz Julius von Haast (1822-1887),' *Bonner Geschichtsblätter*.39 (1989), pp. 273-93.

<sup>6</sup> Molloy, p. 25.

himself to build up ‘practically single-handed’ the Canterbury Museum.<sup>7</sup> The book emphasises the difficulties Haast faced in achieving his goals and laments the lack of recognition and appreciation that should have been more widely expressed during Haast’s lifetime, and which by the 1940s were seemingly forgotten altogether.<sup>8</sup>

R.M. Burdon is among those who wrote about Julius Haast prior to the von Haast biography. Although his biographical essay, ‘Sir Julius von Haast,’ appeared in 1950 in the third volume of his *New Zealand Notables* series, his study was already completed in 1945.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is representative of what was remembered about Julius Haast before Heinrich von Haast effectively rendered superficial everything written before 1948. It echoes the contemporary sentiment that Haast, among other things, was ‘an unmitigated nuisance to the Provincial Government.’<sup>10</sup>

If Burdon comes across as being surprisingly critical of his subject, von Haast strikes back with an unsurprising bias in defence of his father’s actions. His use of language that is critical of ‘Haast’s enemies’ is common throughout the work.<sup>11</sup> In the 1940s, Burdon and von Haast were faced with a particular challenge: that of writing about a German whose life and work was supposed to be regarded as important to science and New Zealand’s history. Burdon faced the problem head on by reassuring the reader that Julius Haast was ‘a product of that “learned, indefatigable, deep-thinking Germany...where abstract thought can still take shelter,” the Germany of Thomas Carlyle, which once actually existed.’<sup>12</sup> Burdon might be excused for wrestling with the task of writing about a German at a time when Germany was the enemy, but his use of a quotation from Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* must have even then

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 30; von Haast, p. xiii.

<sup>8</sup> Molloy, p. 30; von Haast, pp. 972-4.

<sup>9</sup> R.M. Burdon, *New Zealand Notables: Series Three* (Auckland, 1950), p. 135(n).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>11</sup> H. F. von Haast, *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast, K.C.M.G., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.R.S.: Explorer, Geologist, Museum Builder* (Wellington, 1948), p. 522.

<sup>12</sup> Burdon, p. 135.

appeared patronising. Did Burdon actually believe that his readers needed to be reminded that Germany was different a century before? This may also reveal something of Burdon's own bias, for his interpretation may be a reflection of the Carlylian view of the nineteenth century that German thinking and science was superior. This explanation in turn accounts for Haast's success in New Zealand: only a German could have stepped ashore and accomplished what Haast did.

Heinrich von Haast, on the other hand, ignores that problem almost altogether. He knew he was writing about a German, but he planned on publishing the book himself and for posterity's sake. Unlike Burdon's Carlylian view that Canterbury's Geologist had to be a German, von Haast's interpretation is that Canterbury's Geologist had to be Haast. The German problem did not exist for von Haast in terms of the actual biography, for he was writing about his father, a British subject, a New Zealander and a scientist. This may explain, too, why he put so little effort into researching his father's life in Europe: that is not what he wanted his father to be remembered for and that is not what he wanted to write about. He actually put more emphasis on what Haast did not like about Germany and why he and thousands of other Germans left than any part of his life there before; therefore, why should he make an apology at all? Even so, Haast was German and his son does not deny him that; making some references to his being German but certainly not in any Carlylian sense.

Naturally some sources were common to both Burdon and von Haast, although Burdon did not have access to family papers. There are identical references in both accounts that have been found to be inaccurate which suggests that Heinrich von Haast did not simply remember incorrectly. For example, both state that Haast's

father, Matthias, was one time burgomaster of Bonn.<sup>13</sup> Burgomaster, the English rendering of the German word *bürgermeister*, sometimes translated mayor, is used in both instances. Langer writes that this cannot be verified and that the name Haast is not listed among the Burgomasters of Bonn from 1800 in Ennen and Höroldt's *Kleine Geschichte der Stadt Bonn*.<sup>14</sup> This further suggests that the source was a record initiated by Julius Haast himself or someone reporting on him.

Historians are naturally suspicious of biography because the subject is central to the work and there is not sufficient room or motivation to consider the broader interpretations of the social, cultural, economic and political events of the time. Such events are interpreted only as they relate to the subject. Therefore, in the case of von Haast's *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast*, the Canterbury Museum is the creation of Julius Haast and the other players and circumstances merely help or hinder his efforts.

The biographical approach adopted by von Haast has served a purpose quite other than explaining why Julius Haast was able to accomplish what he did in Canterbury. It emphasises his accomplishments with the intended purpose of preserving his memory and ensuring that he is recognised for what he did. While it gives an account of the events that took place, von Haast interpreted those events only to the extent to which they affected Haast in his efforts to accomplish his goals.

With Julius Haast having died some sixty years before, what Heinrich von Haast and R.M. Burdon each did, albeit from differing vantage points, was reacquaint the public with the nearly forgotten events of the previous century with respect to Haast's activities relating to science and the Canterbury Museum. What each was unable to do was explain Haast's motivation and success other than to say that he

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; von Haast, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Langer, p. 274(n).

accomplished many things by his ‘untiring zeal, ability, and industry.’<sup>15</sup> Moreover, what has become the accepted popular view held by those who are particularly interested in the history of the museum is that it came into being solely because Canterbury was fortunate enough to acquire Haast in 1861.

### **Purpose of Thesis**

This thesis aims to explain the significance of Julius Haast’s career and foster a fresh understanding of his place in New Zealand history. This can be accomplished by identifying those aspects of his life and actions that made his contributions to science and the formation of the Canterbury Museum historically significant.

Heinrich von Haast’s *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast*, gives a thorough account of what Haast did (i.e. surveyed Canterbury and Westland, founded the Philosophical Institute, built the Canterbury Museum, etc.), but it does little to explain why. Furthermore, von Haast could not have known to what degree some of his father’s activities would be of significance to subsequent generations. New Zealand is a young nation such that the importance of much of its early history is only now becoming apparent. Many discussions have taken place since von Haast wrote his book and some of them will be examined in the following chapters. Some of these discussions have occurred as a result of von Haast’s biography and others have arisen in consultation with it. Thankfully, he gathered into one place a huge amount of material that has become the sourcebook of information that many scholars have since used to attach significance to the events relating to Julius Haast as a scientist and museum builder. The son accomplished his mission of keeping his father’s memory alive and by publishing his biography he ensured that subsequent generations would

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<sup>15</sup> von Haast, p. 971. From the inscription on a marble tablet erected in the Canterbury Museum by the Board of Governors.

at least be able to appreciate the magnitude of work that his father accomplished in his lifetime.

This great book, however, is not without its shortcomings. First, it is so large (1164 pages) that it is difficult to navigate. Because it is arranged mostly in chronological order, the themes are scattered throughout. Of the 72 chapters, 47 address the subjects of Haast's work (i.e. geology, exploration, scientific research, etc.). Fourteen chapters are related to the workings of the learned societies Haast was associated with and the many correspondences he maintained with other scientists around the world. Only eleven chapters are devoted to social aspects, including his family, and are mainly von Haast's running commentaries on the people and places that Haast knew. Secondly, the book is laced throughout with von Haast's opinions and arguments in defence of Julius Haast who was sometimes visited by controversy as in the cases of the discovery of Haast Pass and the Moa Bone Point Cave excavation.

In recent years a new appreciation for the life and work of Julius Haast has begun to emerge as a result of overlapping disciplines and the exchange of knowledge that only time and curiosity can facilitate. And so, since the publication of *The Life and Times*, historians and scientists have added to the literature that is reaffirming Julius Haast's place in the historiography of nineteenth-century New Zealand and science. This thesis observes that literature and marks the framework for pursuing a fuller appreciation of the life and work of Julius Haast.

In its entirety, this thesis aims to acknowledge Julius Haast's place in the history of nineteenth-century Canterbury with the benefit of demystifying his origins, explaining his transition from geologist to museum builder and providing some examples that illustrate his influence on the development and progress of science and



culture in New Zealand. Most of the praise bestowed upon Julius Haast is for his work as Provincial Geologist and founding Director of the Canterbury Museum, including his contributions to science and efforts toward enhancing educational resources through the establishment of the museum. More recently, steps toward a new appreciation for Haast into the twenty-first century have emphasised two areas: his contributions to science and culture that are noted to be significant in relation to recent learning, and a closer look at his European origins that for so long have been left in the shadows. It is unsatisfactory that so little is known about his life prior to migrating to New Zealand. Heinrich von Haast admitted to being at a disadvantage in recording what was known about his father's previous life in Europe in what otherwise amounts to a massive biography. He simply did not know much about his father's youth and life in Europe and, though he was his son, had to turn to the biographical notices Haast had given to newspapers and an obituary published in Bonn.<sup>16</sup>

To achieve the aim of this thesis, a structured approach is undertaken to firmly establish Julius Haast within a historical context. Heinrich von Haast and, more recently, Colin Burrows have to some extent speculated as to certain details concerning Haast's earlier life in Europe. In Chapter 2 of this thesis their speculation is explored and given fuller consideration. Since the evidence of Haast's life in Germany is so very slight, it is hoped that some speculation is permissible within the proper historical context and with the understanding that it is only speculation. This study recognises von Haast's monumental work as the authoritative source of information about Haast, but with all due caution in regard to his interpretive

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 3(n).

shortcomings. In as much as Heinrich von Haast self-published it for the purpose of preserving the memory of his father, it can also be viewed as a family document.

By carefully analysing the social aspects of Haast's involvement in the developing province of Canterbury, certain conclusions can be drawn concerning his motivations, especially with respect to the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury and the Canterbury Museum. The characterisation of Haast in New Zealand is supported by details that can be known about his life in Europe. This approach is adopted to better explain or interpret the existing biographical sources and does not intend to replace them.

Sir Julius von Haast is simply referred to as Julius Haast or Haast throughout this study. Heinrich von Haast set the precedence himself, 'for so I shall call him throughout the book,' and to avoid any confusion over the many references to the son, Heinrich von Haast or simply von Haast.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Julius Haast did not style himself 'Julius von Haast' until after receiving an Austrian knighthood on 15 June 1875.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. xi.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 776-7.

## Chapter 2

### Who Was Julius Haast?

Almost everything written about Julius Haast concerns what he did after coming to New Zealand and little of that explains him in any larger sense. It is frustrating to find so few references to Haast's life in Europe because background is essential to understanding subsequent events. Knowing something about Haast's upbringing, education, work, family and friends before coming to New Zealand would be helpful in explaining what drove him to accomplish so much in the second half of his life.

Among the more serious scholars interested in Julius Haast are the scientists. Wolfhart Langer, a professor of palaeontology at University of Bonn, has sought out relevant records in Germany that verify, correct or dismiss some of the information in von Haast's biography. Still, not much is gained in knowledge of the personal aspects of his life.

Heinrich von Haast's detailed account of Julius Haast's life and work in New Zealand has, since 1948, served as a mine for information about exploration and science in nineteenth-century New Zealand and the origins of the Canterbury Museum. Colin Burrows is an example of a scientist who has made a study of Haast's explorations. In his book, *Julius Haast in the Southern Alps*, Burrows examines Haast's pioneer work in glacial geology in the central South Island and the topographical maps that he produced. Owing much to Langer's findings, Burrows' summary of Haast's background is the most accurate rendering to date. In providing this background, Burrows illustrates the importance of knowing something about the history of the person whose work the book is about. He is drawn in by the questions

that are created by gaps in the record and must speculate. He notes that he was not the first to do this: ‘...Heinrich was uncertain on some points, and part of what he wrote was surmise.’<sup>1</sup> Burrows draws a number of minor conclusions (viz. Haast trained as a mining technician, had liberal views on religion and politics, fell out with his parents) that will stand in the gaps and thereby allow the narrative of Haast’s life in Europe to flow.<sup>2</sup> By doing this, he demonstrates the first real attempt to understand Julius Haast’s life and work in New Zealand in relation to his prior life in Europe. Others have put forth less effort. Heinrich von Haast counted the history lost while Burdon could only explain Haast as having come from the Germany of Thomas Carlyle. In a shorter version of his article on Julius Haast prepared for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Wolfhart Langer suggests that so little is known about Haast before he arrived in New Zealand because he ‘spared no effort in hushing up most of the events of his unsuccessful early life in Europe.’<sup>3</sup> Although much of Haast’s early life in Europe has not been preserved and Heinrich von Haast was incorrect in some places, Langer’s assessment of Haast’s life is puzzling since he does not produce any evidence in support of his statement.

By focusing on aspects of the culture that produced Haast it is possible to attribute qualities to the man that explain much about who he was by the time he arrived in New Zealand. This chapter focuses on three areas of Haast’s life that are significant: he was German, he was a Romantic and he was a Freemason. By adopting this tri-focal approach, it is possible to examine some of the factors that moulded him into a person who fitted naturally into the burgeoning European settler society of nineteenth-century New Zealand.

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<sup>1</sup> Colin Burrows, *Julius Haast in the Southern Alps* (Christchurch, 2005), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>3</sup> Langer, ‘Haast, Sir (John Francis) Julius von [formerly Johann Franz Haast] (1822-1887), Geologist and Explorer,’ in H C G Matthew and B Harrison, eds. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 10 (2004), p. 1093.

It will be necessary here to outline what is known about Haast during those years of his life before going to New Zealand in order to apply the external factors of the social and political forces of Central Europe that affected him.

Johann Franz Julius Haast was born 1 May 1822 in the Rhineland city of Bonn in the State of Prussia into a Catholic family. He was one of nine children. He went to school in Bonn until 1838 when he went to Cologne for secondary schooling where he studied German, of course, but also French, English, history, geography, natural history and mathematics. He received only moderate grades and did poorly in mathematics. Afterwards, he returned to Bonn and began a 2-year apprenticeship. Langer states that the type of apprenticeship is unknown, but Burrows suggests that there is reason to believe he trained as a mining technician.<sup>4</sup> At this time he came to know two professional geologists, possibly attending their lectures as part of his apprenticeship: Johann Jacob Noeggerath and Ernst Heinrich Karl von Dechen. Noeggerath was an expert in geology and mineralogy and chief of the mining department at Bonn University. Von Dechen was skilled in mining, metallurgy and geological map-making and he was director of the Royal Mines Inspectorate in Bonn.<sup>5</sup>

Sometime after 1841 Haast went to Belgium where in 1842 he was initiated into the Masonic Lodge Philadelphia (Grand Orient of Belgium). Then, in 1844, he went to the free city of Frankfurt am Main where he became very involved in the music community, taking singing and violin lessons. This is probably how he met Antonia Schmidt who was from a very musical family. They were married in 1846 and their son, Robert, was born in 1848.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Langer, *Bonner Deschichtsblätter*, p. 275; Burrows, p. 17. Burrows draws the conclusion independent of Langer that Haast's apprenticeship was related to mining.

<sup>5</sup> von Haast, p. 20(n).

<sup>6</sup> von Haast, p. 4; Langer, p. 277. Langer does not mention Robert.

He is known to have worked as a seller of textiles and flowers, a haulage contractor and a bookseller. In 1852 he was recorded as being a peddler, but it is not known what kind of business he was in or why he had travelled in Belgium, France, Holland, England, Russia, Austria, Switzerland and Italy. In 1857 he was commissioned to translate into German *New Zealand: The Britain of the South* by Charles Hursthouse and by 1858 he was hired by a British Shipping company to go to New Zealand and report on the colony's suitability for a German immigration scheme.<sup>7</sup>

At the time Julius Haast lived, German referred to the German-speaking people of Central Europe, and Germany was a confederation composed of many different independent states or principalities and free cities. A unified German state did not exist. Haast, though he was German, was actually a Prussian citizen by virtue of the fact that Bonn became part of Prussia as a result of the same Congress of Vienna that failed to create a unified Germany in 1815.<sup>8</sup> This being the case, Haast was a Bonner and a Rhinelander, which made him a Prussian citizen. When he returned to Germany in 1844 he went to Frankfurt, which was a free city, and by 1846 became a citizen there having relinquished his Prussian citizenship.<sup>9</sup>

The Germany of Thomas Carlyle might not have meant as much to the young Julius Haast as it did the Englishmen he would later encounter in New Zealand. The Germany viewed by Burdon represents only one narrow aspect of the people of mid nineteenth-century Germany. In fact, the Germany belonging to Haast during the first

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<sup>7</sup> Langer, pp. 277-8.

<sup>8</sup> James J. Sheehan, *German History 1770-1866* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 401-2; Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals* (Princeton, 1991), p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> Langer, p. 277.

half of his life is noted for the political, social, cultural and philosophical movements that swept the lands in various degrees from region to region.<sup>10</sup>

There is nothing unusual about Haast's childhood, his education, even the fact that he did poorly in maths. Langer, no doubt, points out these details because it is in contrast to the great man, the 'savant' who is depicted in his son's recounting.

Haast's early life becomes interesting when he goes to Verviers. Colin Burrows speculates that the reason he may have been sent to Belgium was a 'falling out' with his parents.<sup>11</sup> Burrows draws this conclusion from information in an exchange of letters between Haast and a stonemason in Brussels by the name of Veling. Haast wrote, '...if I had not been such a wild fellow I should have devoted myself to mining. But my father wanted me to leave Bonn and I was therefore sent to Verviers.'<sup>12</sup> Burrows couples this with later correspondence that suggests that Haast had abandoned Catholicism. He writes, 'It seems likely that his free thinking on religion and politics had caused a falling out with his parents and this may have been the immediate cause of his exile in Belgium.'<sup>13</sup>

Burrows' speculation may in part be essentially true—that is, his father may have arranged for his move to Belgium—but to suggest that they had a falling out may be too convenient. If there is any substance to what Heinrich von Haast wrote about the grandfather he never knew, then Matthias Haast was 'respected and loved for his charitable disposition.'<sup>14</sup> Haast's father was remembered as once being burgomaster and while this, according to Langer, was probably not the case, it does put Haast's memories of his father within the context of local town politics where the Rhineland residents of Bonn, having been arbitrarily absorbed into the powerful state

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<sup>10</sup> Sheehan, 'Part Four: Towards a New Order, 1848-1866' pp. 655 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Burrows, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Julius Haast to R. Veling, 4 May 1881, quoted in Burrows, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Burrows, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> von Haast, p. 1.

of Prussia, were not without malcontents.<sup>15</sup> By this time Haast would have finished his apprenticeship and presumably been working. Why then would his father send him to Verviers?

If Haast was involved in political agitation, the other half of Burrows' speculation, then it is difficult to say what drove him to it. Throughout Germany, the 1840s were marked by social crisis, but it did not reach widespread critical stages until 1848.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, while many Germans found themselves destitute or faced with uncertainty some industries, especially mining, were reaching their highest levels of production.<sup>17</sup> If Haast were a trained mining technician, he would not have been among those without prospects, but there is still the evidence of Haast's 'wild' youth and outspoken liberal views to consider.<sup>18</sup> Sending his son to Verviers could have been an act of paternal concern for his son's safety. Religion never occupied a chief position in Haast's life, but his family was Catholic and it can be noted that Catholics were not least among those who believed that change could come about by 'taking on the Prussian authorities with verve and energy.'<sup>19</sup>

In stating, 'Later correspondence from New Zealand shows that Haast had rejected Catholicism,' Burrows may have chosen his words too soon. The letter was from Gottfried Kinkel, a friend of Haast's from Bonn. Kinkel was a poet and professor of art history in Bonn. He was imprisoned for life for participating in the 1849 uprising in the Palatinate, but escaped to the United States and London.<sup>20</sup> In London he came to know Sophia Dobson Collet, the sister of Haast's future father-in-law, Edward Dobson, and Sophia's aunt, Mary Barker. Haast must have asked Kinkel

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<sup>15</sup> Sperber, pp. 307-341.

<sup>16</sup> Sheehan, p. 659.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 639.

<sup>18</sup> von Haast, pp. 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> Sperber, pp. 38, 339-41.

<sup>20</sup> von Haast, p. 6(n).



to convey to the two ladies that he was no longer Catholic, for Kinkel had written to Haast on 9 January 1866 and said he had done so.<sup>21</sup> If anything, this suggests that Haast never formally abandoned Catholicism until after coming to New Zealand, perhaps as a condition of marriage to Mary Dobson. It also suggests that not being Catholic was more important to the Dobsons than to Haast, and since Kinkel was a known for his anticlericalism, he might well have been important to him, too.<sup>22</sup>

If Haast's later views are any indication of the direction his political thought processes were taking him in his younger days, then it may be useful to note them here. In a report that he wrote to Willis, Gann & Co., he outlined numerous reasons why Germans were emigrating including oppression, high taxes and compulsory military service.<sup>23</sup> This raises the question of Haast's own military service of which there is no record. If he was in the army it may have been during the years 1841-42 which are mostly unaccounted for. Another possibility is that he went to Belgium to avoid conscription, which might further account for his move to Frankfurt upon returning to Germany rather than Bonn. Haast maintained his critical view of German governments all his life. In 1874 at an annual dinner of the German Society in Christchurch he spoke of the differences between the Provincial Government in Canterbury and government in Germany, exalting freedom of thought and speech in New Zealand. In a rare aside, Heinrich von Haast noted 'the Nazis were by no means the first to muzzle the Press in Germany.'<sup>24</sup>

In 1844 Haast moved to Frankfurt where his life took on new dimensions as a young German. He became acquainted with the musical community and married Antonie Schmitt, the daughter of musician Aloys Schmitt, on 26 October 1846. Their

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 322(n).

<sup>22</sup> Sperber, p. 179.

<sup>23</sup> von Haast, pp. 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 643

son, Robert, according to von Haast was born on 10 January 1848; but Langer, who seems to be concerned with verifying the details of Haast's life in Europe, makes no mention of this.<sup>25</sup>

In the years between 1844 and 1858 Haast worked, became a family man and otherwise appears to have settled into what German sociologists later called the *Biedermeier* lifestyle in which families enjoy the domesticity of family and tranquillity in the home apart from the social and political turmoil outside.<sup>26</sup> There is no reason to doubt that in this context Haast became part of the Schmitt family and when his work took him away his wife and child were not left on their own.

Haast can most accurately be described as a salesman during the time that he lived in Frankfurt. There is no evidence that Haast ever worked in direct relation to mines, but rather in selling textiles or books and hauling. His work took him away from home for extended periods of time, according to his own account, travelling to Austria, Russia and Italy.<sup>27</sup>

Although his school records would not have predicted it, Haast found in Frankfurt a life more intellectually stimulating than he would have experienced in Bonn. He married into a family of cultural importance, he participated in their musical activities by playing the violin and singing, and he made his living by engaging in business. His linguistic abilities have been proven and working with a bookseller would have kept him in touch with literary trends and liberal views. By 1857 he had demonstrated enough skill to be commissioned to translate into German Charles Hursthouse's *New Zealand: Britain of the South*.<sup>28</sup> Haast could not have

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Sheehan, pp. 356-9.

<sup>27</sup> von Haast, pp. 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Langer, p. 278.

completed the task without at least developing a desire to visit New Zealand one day for himself.

‘His nature was impetuous and inflammable, ambitious, emotional, romantic, perhaps flamboyant, his capacity for work unlimited,’ wrote Heinrich von Haast in description of his father just arriving in New Zealand and joining Ferdinand Hochstetter. ‘He was quick to anger and hasty and rash in his expression of it. With his wide knowledge in various branches of science, he combined the qualities of an excellent musician, a fine singer, a capable violinist, and an appreciation of the fine arts.’<sup>29</sup>

Of course, not all Germans born in 1822 were romantics, but Haast had the temperament and displayed the attributes of a romantic as when on 21 December 1858, having just arrived in Auckland, he wrote:

Before me lay the sea’s blue flood penetrating deeply into the coast, picturesquely surrounded by hills. The scene was dominated by the proud crest of Rangitoto suffused with crimson and gold in the last rays of the setting sun. There was no one to share my admiration or exchange a lively and sympathetic greeting. Strange and cold was all around me. The tongue they spoke was not mine. They passed me by with indifference. Only the soldier in the sentry-box regarded with astonishment the quiet stranger who wet-eyed but immovable gazed upon the sea and sky and the clouds of even. My heart was heavy, my soul cast down.<sup>30</sup>

Romanticism was the dominant cultural movement in German-speaking countries from about 1790 through the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, as a whole, the Romantic Movement reached its greatest level of achievement in Germany. By 1820 the literature, art and music was expressing the ideals of romantic thought.<sup>31</sup> If

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<sup>29</sup> von Haast, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Julius Haast, prose quoted in von Haast, p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Sheehan, pp. 326-42.

by no other means, Haast would have absorbed a considerable amount of the Romantic spirit in the music he sang and played in Frankfurt between the years 1844 and 58, but also as a student in Bonn and Cologne. Among the great composers of the Romantic era are Beethoven and Schubert. Music is considered by some to be the highest form of romantic expression because of its purity and detachment from the real world.<sup>32</sup> Haast was immersed in such a world of music. Later in Christchurch he told Robert Parker, one of New Zealand's greatest musicians, that he had once played in an orchestra conducted by Mendelssohn, another great romantic composer. Heinrich von Haast explains that this was likely at a festival in Bonn, which indicates that Haast began playing the violin quite young.<sup>33</sup>

The way Burdon understood it, Haast chose science over music as his profession 'and he went to the famous university of Bonn to study geology and minerology.'<sup>34</sup> Given Langer's findings, this appears to be inaccurate, but may hold a thread of truth. The prospects of making a living would have been an important factor in whatever vocation he settled on. The artists of his time were known for having passion, but making no money.<sup>35</sup> In Frankfurt, Haast found himself once again in the company of musicians, but he was set to make a living off stage; and if music was not enough to saturate him in the romantic mindset, there was plenty of romantic literature. Haast grew up at a time when reading the great Romantics would have been common and, while working in a Frankfurt book shop, unavoidable.

When Haast was a boy he dreamed of adventures in far away lands. He would later recall a boyhood wish, having read of Cook's voyages in his lesson-book, 'to journey across the ocean and to see the wonders of the South Seas and the cannibals

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 334.

<sup>33</sup> von Haast, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> Burdon, p. 135.

<sup>35</sup> Sheehan, pp. 576-7.

that inhabited them.’<sup>36</sup> Among the books in his library upon his death was Alexander von Humboldt’s three-volume biography.<sup>37</sup> It would be no surprise if Humboldt had been one of Haast’s boyhood heroes. Furthermore, Humboldt’s life summed up the romantic spirit for many. He captured the imagination of many young Germans with accounts of his explorations, but when he was a younger man his controlling mother would not allow him to pursue his dream of becoming a naturalist and explorer. In accordance with his mother’s wishes, he sought to become a civil servant by studying law and then went to the Mining Academy at Freiberg. He excelled as a mining inspector and was eventually promoted to superintendent. His acquaintances with Willdenow and Goethe encouraged him to never lose sight of his dream to become a scientific man. When his mother died in 1797 he resigned from the civil service and began preparations for the voyages that would win him everlasting fame.<sup>38</sup>

It is interesting here to note Humboldt’s association with mining while considering Haast’s implied relationship with the mining industry. Mining was among the most romanticised institutions in Germany and since it was such a common field for young men to be trained in, it would have been difficult to bring together a group of intellectuals without finding that several of them had trained as miners or had some bureaucratic association with mining. Even Goethe, who was trained in law, was an administrator tasked with the reopening of a silver mine at Ilmenau. The experience encouraged his lifelong interest in geology and inspired one of his greatest poems, ‘Ilmenau.’<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> von Haast, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> von Haast, ‘Catalogue of the Books Belonging to the Late Sir Julius von Haast, K.C.M.G., F.R.S., &c,’ (Christchurch, 1887).

<sup>38</sup> Desmond Wilcox, *Explorers* (London, 1975), pp. 146-7.

<sup>39</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, *German Romanticism and Its Institutions* (Princeton, 1990), p. 19.

The descent into a mine was a common fieldtrip for students throughout Germany and the folktales known to them had images of mines.<sup>40</sup> An especially well known and loved tale from the Brothers Grimm is of a young maiden who is taken under the protection of ‘seven dwarfs who dug and delved in the mountains for ore.’<sup>41</sup> Germany was the leading source of precious metals in Europe before the discovery of America. Germany’s Industrial Revolution came much later than Britain’s and as the poets and playwrights of England were making the transition from classicism to romanticism, the miners they envisioned, which they did very rarely, descended into the foreboding, dark and dangerous depths of the earth for coal and iron ore.<sup>42</sup> In contrast, the German poets and playwrights envisioned the miners singing their work song:

*Glück auf! Glück auf!*  
*Wir fördern es herauf*  
*Das blinkende Erz, wir fördern’s herauf!*  
 (*Glück auf! We bring it forth, the glittering ore, we bring it forth!*)<sup>43</sup>

When Haast married Mary Dobson in 1863 he purchased his first home in Christchurch from W. T. L. Travers who had the house built for Haast on a section in Avonside. Haast named the house ‘*Glückauf*,’ after the ‘hearty German miner’s greeting.’<sup>44</sup>

German Romanticism is widely recognised in the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), whose *The Wanderer Above a Sea of Mists*, 1818 (Plate 1) represents the romantic notion of standing at the edge of one experience while contemplating the uncertainty of the next. The Wanderer has gone as far as he can go

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-21.

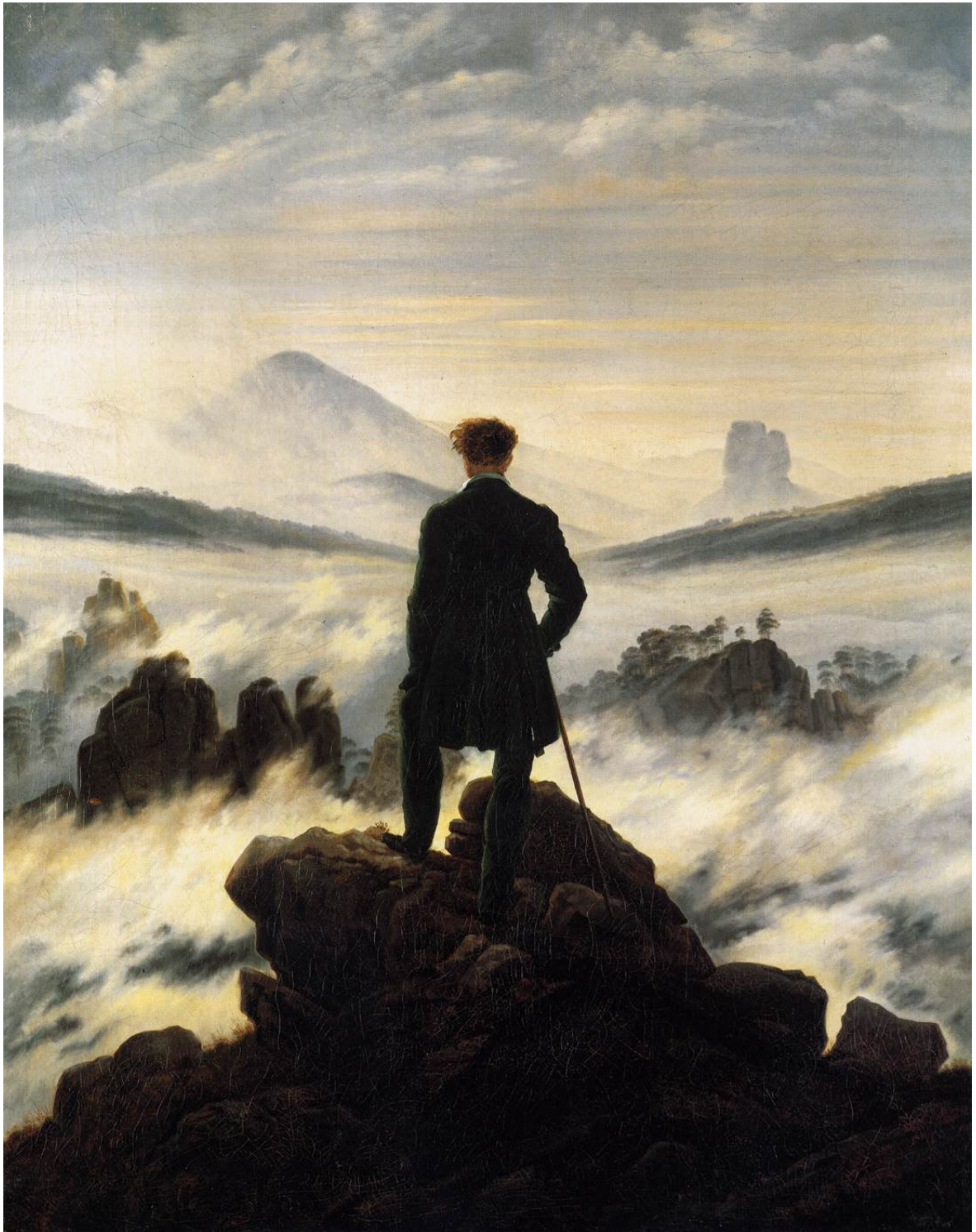
<sup>41</sup> Grimm, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (New York, 1972), p. 251

<sup>42</sup> Ziolkowski, pp. 23-5.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>44</sup> von Haast, *Life and Times*, p. 323.

Plate 1



*The Wanderer Above a Sea of Mists* by Caspar David Friedrich, 1818

Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

in his city clothes, and though he can visualise what lay beyond the expanse, he can only go there in his mind. His limitations and obligations keep him from setting off on an adventure into the distance. While this painting is representative of the Romantic Movement, it has been co-opted by every subsequent generation in Germany to express its own search for identity as it emerges from one social system to the next.<sup>45</sup>

Naturally, such an image is easily representative of an individual's own situation. Friedrich probably thought of himself when he painted it, but many others have seen themselves in the image: 'lonely heroes on a quest, travellers frightened in the night, lovers abandoned or estranged.' These are recurring themes in romantic art.<sup>46</sup> This is precisely why men like Humboldt and Haast are cast as romantics. Humboldt could be seen as standing at the brink, unable to go a step further until released from his mother's hold. Or Julius Haast, who had obligations; might he not also have dreamed of seeing New Zealand with his own eyes after translating Hursthouse's book? The difference between Humboldt and Haast, however, is quite plain: Humboldt had the means to explore, but was held back by his family while Haast had to travel in order to make a living. This is of course an act of oversimplifying, but the point is Haast incorporated his dreams into his acts of responsibility. He did not simply sail to New Zealand just to see it; he worked his way up to achieving enough experience to be considered qualified to investigate and write about German immigration to New Zealand.

What Haast did for a living in Verviers remains a mystery, but his initiation into the Masonic Lodge Philadelphia, Grand Orient of Belgium on 11 May 1842 is certain. On 11 May of the following year he was admitted to the Master's degree in

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<sup>45</sup> Werner Hoffman, *Caspar David Friedrich* (New York, 2000), pp. 9-13.

<sup>46</sup> Sheehan, p. 336.



that lodge. Heinrich von Haast made only four references to Haast's involvement in Freemasonry: a Masonic diploma and apron are counted among his few belongings upon arriving in New Zealand; the certificate of initiation and Masonic diploma as well as his transfer to the Lodge Eclectic of Frankfurt; Haast served as a steward at a Masonic ball in Christchurch, June 1870; and his fellow-masons participated in his funeral in 1887.<sup>47</sup>

Haast was an active Freemason from 1842 until his death in 1887. In order to receive the master's degree, Haast would have had to pass through the three levels of Masonic initiation. Therefore, he must have satisfied the mandates to live according to the principles and virtues of a Freemason. The three Principles of Freemasonry are Brotherly Love, Relief (i.e. charity, philanthropy) and Truth. The Four Cardinal Virtues exalted in Freemasonry are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. A Freemason must distinguish himself with the characteristics of Virtue, Honour and Mercy. A Freemason must also maintain faith in God, epitomise charity in dealing with others, strive to understand God's creation by unlocking the 'hidden mysteries of nature and science' by studying the seven liberal arts and sciences (grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy) and maintain his honour at all times, remaining stoic in the face of death.<sup>48</sup>

Undoubtedly, Haast's new life in Frankfurt proceeded differently than it would have if he had not entered into the Freemason's way of life. The brother masons he would have encountered at the lodge may have been important to him both on a social and business level. While he remained a Freemason for the rest of his life, his son did not make much of it. It is possible that he did not want to infer that Haast was helped to greatness by any of his associations. It is more likely, however, that

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<sup>47</sup> von Haast, pp. 1, 3, 590, 969-70.

<sup>48</sup> John Hamill and Robert Gilbert, eds., *Freemasonry: A Celebration of the Craft* (St Albans, 1992), p. 57.

Heinrich von Haast thought Haast's associations such as Freemasonry, along with other aspects of his personal life, including his faith and family, were too personal, or as his mother thought, 'too sacred...to reveal to the public gaze.'<sup>49</sup>

By the time Haast left Germany he had reached a level of maturity far beyond that of his boyhood days in Bonn, but he still possessed a youthful spirit, which he maintained all his life. The Haast that arrived in New Zealand was a product of a German environment in which political, social, cultural and economic forces all played a part. His positive outlook and much of what he brought with him to New Zealand helped him fit into the setting of a growing young colony, but at times he would find difficulty living and working among the English. The second half of Julius Haast's life, that which took place in New Zealand, is extremely well documented. Even so, it is better understood in the light of the events and experiences of the first half of his life, even if what is available is fragmented and joined together somewhat speculatively.

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<sup>49</sup> Von Haast, p. xi.

### Chapter 3

#### **Julius Haast in New Zealand: An Explanation**

Julius Haast did not come to New Zealand to build a museum, nor did he arrive on the shores of Auckland on 21 December 1858 to seek employment as a geologist. His business in New Zealand was an arrangement with the British ship owners, Willis, Gann & Company, and for whom he intended to report on the suitability of the colony for a German immigration scheme.<sup>1</sup> His inclination toward thoroughness would no doubt have meant that his reports for perspective German immigrants would have included detailed observations of the mountains, hills and valleys of New Zealand. Whatever his purpose for coming to this land, the uniqueness of all that lay before him could only have been a bountiful source of delight.

Haast arrived at the onset of New Zealand's industrial modernisation: steamers were replacing sailing ships and railways were in the planning stages.<sup>2</sup> Geology was at the top of the list of those sciences that could expect to receive patronage from the government because of its potential to lead to economic rewards. Haast would not have been ignorant of this fact; the German economy that he left was also growing to depend on coal. Germany saw its largest growth in mining and coal production in the 1850s as a direct result of its relation to metallurgy. Steel refining increased in relation to machine production and thus a greater demand for pig iron and iron ore.<sup>3</sup>

In Austria during the 1850s, the natural sciences enjoyed enthusiastic support from the emperor Franz Joseph. His brother, Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian,

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<sup>1</sup> von Haast, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Burdon, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Sheehan, 740.

established a scientific expedition whereby the training frigate *Novara* of the Austrian Navy would sail around the world in exploration. Among the scientists chosen for the expedition was the young geologist Ferdinand Hochstetter. Although he had made a name for himself in the Austrian Geological Survey, Hochstetter was actually German. He was born near Stuttgart and earned his PhD at Tübingen University prior to discovering an abundance of scientific opportunities in Vienna.<sup>4</sup>

The *Novara* arrived at Auckland one day after the *Evening Star*, the ship that Haast arrived on. It was fortuitous that the two Germans arrived within a day of each other, but their subsequent meeting was the most natural of occasions. The crew of the *Novara* was received at a garden party at the home of Dr Carl Fischer, a German practitioner of homeopathic medicine and a botanist. There, Haast met the *Novara*'s geologist and before long the two men discovered how much they had in common: they were both German and loved science. The pair would be inseparable except for brief periods during the remainder of Hochstetter's time in New Zealand.<sup>5</sup>

An arrangement had been made for Hochstetter to examine the Auckland coalfields and he invited Haast to join his team.<sup>6</sup> This is the point in time where everything changed for Julius Haast: his association with Hochstetter resulted in a life permanently devoted to science. His experiences from that point on would lead also to a life firmly planted in Christchurch. Therefore, it is essential here to identify the circumstances, which having had an effect on Haast subsequent to his arrival, laid the foundation for the rest of his life and work.

Haast met Hochstetter at a garden party at the home of Dr Carl Fischer, a practitioner of homeopathic medicine. In July 1859 Fischer captured Haast's likeness

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<sup>4</sup> Les Kermode, 'Ferdinand von Hochstetter,' in James N. Bade, ed., *The German Connection: New Zealand and German-Speaking Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, (Auckland, 1993), p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> von Haast, pp. 7-11.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 7; Ferdinand Hochstetter, *New Zealand: Its Physical Geography, Geology and Natural History*, trans. Edward Sauter (Stuttgart, 1867), p. 15.

in a photograph that attests to his youthful appearance (Plate 2). The first instance in New Zealand where Haast encountered a collection of scientifically arranged specimens was at Fischer's home. Acting as host to the scientists of the *Novara* and Haast, Fischer showed them where to find many excellent specimens and permitted them to examine his own collection.<sup>7</sup> Then, as Haast accompanied Hochstetter, he too was able to participate in the process of collecting specimens.<sup>8</sup>

Their next assignment was the Nelson province and Hochstetter was hoping above all else to find 'remains of the extinct gigantic bird of New Zealand.'<sup>9</sup> Attempts to find moa bones on the North Island were fruitless and Hochstetter could not spare the time to search for them and expect to complete his work in Nelson. He turned the search over to Haast and an assistant named Maling who, over a period of three days, found a large deposit of moa bones in the limestone caves of the Aorere Valley. Interestingly, Burdon romanticises this story more than anyone else. He plays to the heroic image of Haast emerging from the cave in possession of that which has evaded every other explorer. His arrival in Collingwood, where they were to meet Hochstetter, was heralded throughout the community as they came 'leading pack bullocks decked with flowers and loaded with moa bones.' In addition, the Nelson Institute gifted to Hochstetter a near complete moa skeleton.<sup>10</sup>

Haast could not have missed the value placed on these bones. Even if it did not occur to him immediately, their value would have been realised in October 1860 when he learned of the mineral collection of 1,500 European specimens that arrived at

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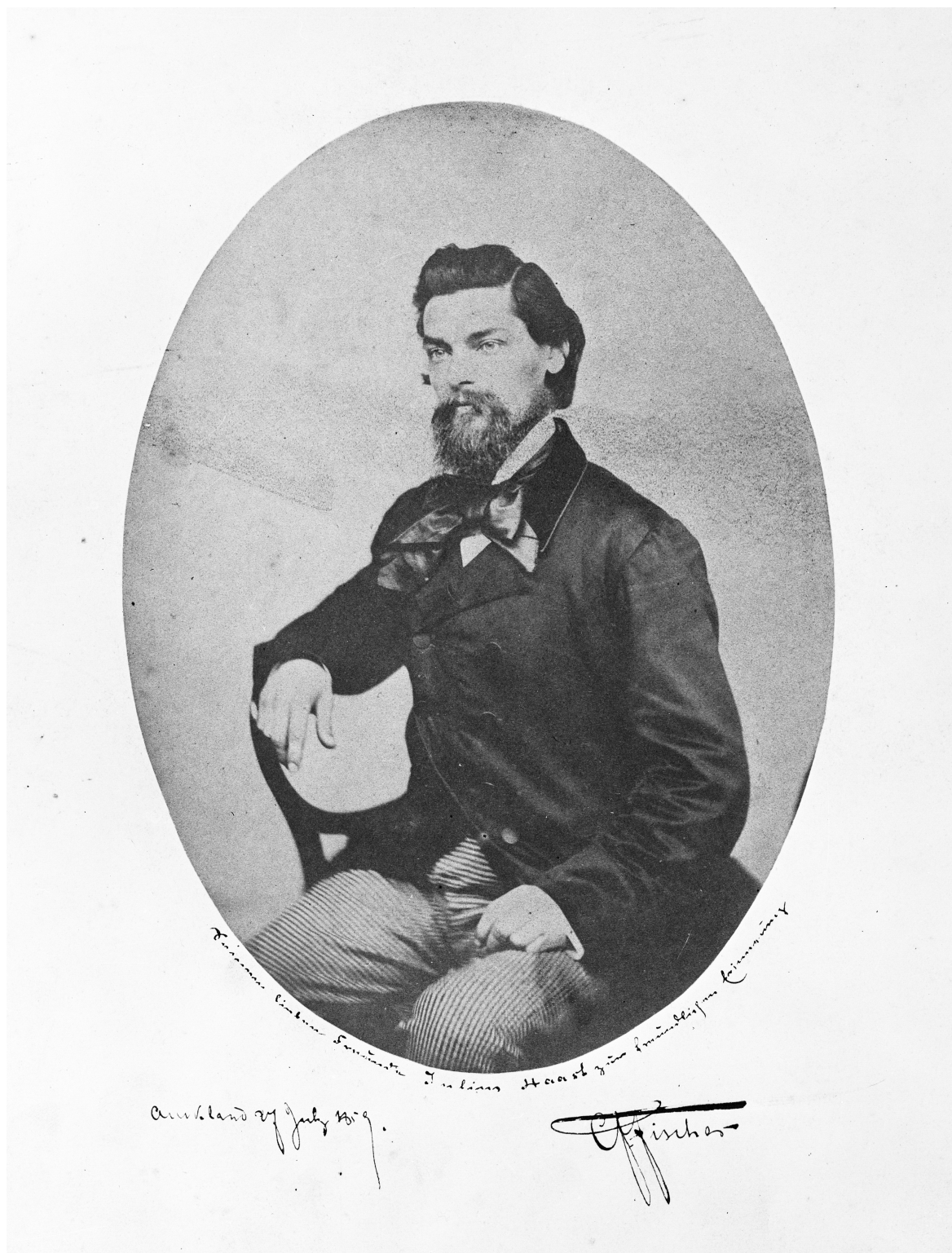
<sup>7</sup> von Haast, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Hochstetter, p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Burdon, pp. 138-9; von Haast, p. 28.

Plate 2



Julius Haast, 1859. Photograph by Carl Fisher.

Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/2 -005289-F

the Nelson Institute in appreciation for the moa skeleton given to Hochstetter.<sup>11</sup> In 1862, Haast received a plaster cast of a complete *Palapteryx ingens*, made from the bones he had found in the limestone caves of the Aorere Valley. These replicas of the huge kiwi-like moa skeleton were being sold to museums internationally for 100 florins each.<sup>12</sup>

The ability to draw maps proved to be one of Haast's most valuable skills. It is likely that he had some prior working knowledge of geological topography and was able to impress Hochstetter enough to be included on his team.<sup>13</sup> These map-drawing skills were honed while working with Hochstetter and were essential to his work in Nelson after Hochstetter left. The significance of the maps to Haast lies in his conviction that such two-dimensional representations of the Earth's surface as seen from above were essential to the learning process, and especially important to understanding geological reports.<sup>14</sup>

The province of Nelson presented a setting that left a lasting impression on Haast. Nelson had a large percentage of people who were interested in science and a Provincial Government that supported scientific pursuits. Also, Nelson had a museum dating back to 1842.<sup>15</sup> On 26 August 1859, Hochstetter was invited to lay the foundation stone, inscribed 'PRO BONO PUBLICO 1859,' for the new Nelson Institute building.<sup>16</sup> When Haast went to Christchurch, there was a feeling that Canterbury was 'the youngest, the richest, the greatest,' province in New Zealand,<sup>17</sup> and yet it would be another nine years before the Canterbury Museum would be built. Nelson made a lasting impression on Haast and the work he did there would be

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<sup>11</sup> C. B. Brereton, *History of the Nelson Institute* (Wellington, 1948), p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> von Haast, p. 220.

<sup>13</sup> Burrows, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> von Haast, pp. 105-6.

<sup>15</sup> Brereton, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> von Haast, p. 116.

referred to for years to come, especially with respect to copies of the reports that he sent around the world.

Toward the end of 1859, as Haast was preparing to survey Nelson's western district, he felt confident that negotiations with the Canterbury Provincial Government would lead to further employment.<sup>18</sup> He wanted to begin work in Canterbury not later than the beginning of 1861 when he could save time and money by commencing at Greymouth, however, he was summoned to Christchurch at the earliest possible date to examine Mt Pleasant between the port of Lyttelton and Christchurch.<sup>19</sup>

Construction of a railway tunnel was underway and a more detailed report of the mountain's composition was required. The newspapers of the day report in great detail the political debate surrounding the venture as well as the actual work that took place.<sup>20</sup> Biographical studies of Haast have tended to portray the German geologist as the man of the hour, saving not only the tunnel project with his favourable report, but William Sefton Moorhouse's political career as well.<sup>21</sup> Whatever the actual impact of Haast's report on the tunnel might have been, the impression it made on Moorhouse and the Provincial Engineer, Edward Dobson, was to be of great personal value. Haast officially became Canterbury's Provincial Geologist on 15 February 1861.<sup>22</sup>

Quite simply, Haast went to Christchurch because of geology. Colin Burrows' interest in mountaineering and an academic background in Quaternary science have inspired him to retrace Haast's explorations of the Southern Alps and examine his theories of glaciation in *Julius Haast in the Southern Alps* (2005). When Heinrich von Haast wrote his book he covered much of the same topic:

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 113-5.

<sup>20</sup> W. J. Gardner, ed., *A History of Canterbury*, vol. 2 (Christchurch, 1971), pp. 77-102.

<sup>21</sup> Burdon, p. 149.

<sup>22</sup> von Haast, p. 123.



I have dealt more fully with the scientific side in special chapters on Glaciers, Gold, and Volcanoes, in which, however, I anticipate that even the layman will find something of interest...I hope to have provided for the expert geologist a source from which he may extract material for a history of Geology and Geologists in New Zealand.<sup>23</sup>

Burrows' advantage over von Haast's account and his purpose in writing his own book is twofold: significant measurable changes have taken place in the glaciers over the 140 years since Haast's pioneer explorations and scientific advances in understanding glacial geology have provided modern interpretations of New Zealand's glaciation.<sup>24</sup>

Burrows' unique perspective derives from his expert knowledge of Quaternary glacial geology and years of experience covering the same ground that Haast explored. He has examined Haast's maps, drawings, reports and publications and makes an assessment of Haast's contribution to New Zealand glacial geology.<sup>25</sup> Beyond acknowledging Haast's positive contributions, Burrows' also considers his errors within the context of the development of glacial geology to date.<sup>26</sup> This is significant because it contributes to the understanding of how glacial geology has evolved as a science. The history of science reveals how the work of earlier scientists prepared the way for subsequent generations of scientists. Progress is noted when the latter builds on or supersedes the findings of the former. Burrows states, '...examination of early studies is often rewarding: new insights can emerge.'<sup>27</sup>

Before the publication this book, there could not have been many people qualified to comment on the value of Haast's contribution to the knowledge and development of New Zealand's Quaternary glacial geology.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. xxxi

<sup>24</sup> Burrows, p. 14

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-73

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-65

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

It is not known how long Julius Haast intended to stay in New Zealand. What is clear is, just as he seized the opportunity to visit New Zealand, he seized every opportunity that presented itself thereafter. Meeting Hochstetter led to his participation in the South Auckland expedition and in turn to his work in the Nelson province. An invitation to explore the geology of Canterbury not only gave him reason to continue his stay in New Zealand, it provided for him employment in an area to which he was by this time obviously suited. Haast's employment by the Canterbury Provincial Government was the next step in a progression of logical moves: he had gone from Auckland to Nelson as Hochstetter's assistant, he stayed on in Nelson after Hochstetter left and he went from Nelson to Canterbury by virtue of his own qualifications and reputation, as recently acquired as they were.

There was more to Julius Haast than science, however, and while it was science that brought him to Canterbury, it was much more that kept him there. Haast was a man who operated on many different levels: he was an accomplished musician, spoke and wrote several languages, drew maps and sketches and painted landscapes.<sup>28</sup> New Zealand represented a new life for him, one that was all the more attractive to him because of the wanderlust cultivated by his German romantic mindset. His prior training and self-acquired qualifications may have given him an advantage, but on the social level he possessed very little standing. He arrived alone and without introduction. His only possessions were contained 'in a stout teak chest. They included a pair of duelling pistols, a Masonic diploma and apron.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> von Haast, pp. 4-5, 321; Haast's extensive correspondence includes letters in English, German, French and Italian, Haast Family Papers, MS-Papers-0037, National Library of New Zealand; Haast's sketches and paintings were usually related to his scientific explorations, but by themselves reveal an artistic ability. Many of his paintings are preserved in the National Library of New Zealand and are available for viewing online at <http://discover.natlib.govt.nz>.

<sup>29</sup> von Haast, p. 1.

The Masonic items described here are representative of Haast's lifelong commitment to the Craft, but otherwise Heinrich von Haast made little mention of his father's activities in relation to his involvement with Freemasonry. By omitting such references he avoids the tendency to explain any of Haast's successes as being the result of an association already in place in Canterbury that was of benefit to him. Heinrich von Haast's few references to Haast's involvement in Freemasonry actually say quite a lot; Haast was unknown to the men of Canterbury in 1860, but to many he was already a Brother. The number of men who were active Freemasons and filled positions that were important to Haast's work or were interested in science and a museum cannot be overlooked.

Freemasonry was well established in Canterbury by the time Haast arrived. Among the three hundred or so settlers who went to Port Cooper (later named Lyttelton) to prepare in advance for the coming of the Canterbury Association were Freemasons. Of that group, Dr William Donald, Thomas Cass and John Marshman were not only Freemasons, but also each one an eventual member of the Christchurch Club where Haast would take up residence.<sup>30</sup>

With the arrival of the first four ships of the Canterbury Association came many more Freemasons including Benjamin Mountfort, J. C. Watts-Russell and Cyrus Davie. Their numbers increased over the next two years with the arrival of such men as Reverend Octavius Mathias, William Sefton Moorhouse, John Ollivier and Crosby Ward.<sup>31</sup>

As can be expected, the first two Masonic lodges in New Zealand were established in Auckland and Wellington, but of note are the two that followed: the

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<sup>30</sup> J. L. Hewland, *English Freemasonry in Canterbury 1859-1959* (Christchurch, 1959), pp. 3-4; Gordon Ogilvie, *The Shagroons' Palace: A History of the Christchurch Club 1856-2006* (Christchurch, 2005), pp. 335-44.

<sup>31</sup> Hewland, pp. 4-5; Ian Lockhead, *A Dream of Spires: Benjamin Mountfort and the Gothic Revival* (Christchurch, 1999), p. 300.

lodge of Unanimity established in Lyttelton in 1851 and the lodge of St Augustine in Christchurch, 1852.<sup>32</sup> The Masonic lodges of Lyttelton and Christchurch are not what brought Haast to Canterbury and his Freemasonry connections may not have had a bearing on his being hired as the Provincial Geologist, but without a doubt the associations were of great social value to him.

Without such a fraternal association in place it would be difficult to explain the convenience of the Christchurch Club so readily extending membership and domicile to the newcomer Julius Haast. The Christchurch Club was a proprietary establishment that provided room and board as an alternative to hotels for its members who came into town from their sheep and cattle farms.<sup>33</sup> John Marshman was one of the first Freemasons in Canterbury and among the earliest members of the Christchurch Club. Concerning the social climate at the club Marshman said, 'Life is less artificial. Everybody knows everybody else and men are estimated rather by what they are than what they do.'<sup>34</sup> Since Haast was quite new in town, he was not accepted into the club because anyone knew him personally, and if what Marshman said applied, then nor was he accepted on the grounds that he was a noted scientific man. Someone had to vouch for him; his Masonic diploma may have been all that was needed to gain acceptance.

Being a Freemason may have been an avenue into the Christchurch Club for Haast by way of a recommendation from other members, but the club was by no means an entity of the Masonic Lodge. Samuel Butler was also a member of the Christchurch Club and became a good friend of Haast's, but even if he had wanted to

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<sup>32</sup> R C Groves, 'The Foundation and Brief Early History of the Founding of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand,' *United Masters Lodge, No. 167 of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons: Lodge of Masonic Research* 28 (May 1990), p. 148.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Bateman Paul, *Letters from Canterbury, New Zealand* (London, 1857), p. 87.

<sup>34</sup> von Haast, p.139.

become a Freemason, his pronounced atheism would have disqualified him from initiation.<sup>35</sup>

Haast lived at the Christchurch Club until his marriage to Mary Dobson in 1863. By this time he was a widower, but here attention is drawn to the question of whether or not his first wife died before he left Germany. Heinrich von Haast tells this portion of his father's story like this: Antonia died before Haast came to New Zealand, and Robert 'was brought up by his mother's people.'<sup>36</sup>

The vagueness of this account might easily be attributed to one of several points. The first being that Heinrich von Haast wrote it some one hundred years after the events took place, and more than one half century after the death of his father when specific information was not sufficiently preserved in memory or documents. Secondly, it is possible that Julius Haast just never talked about it and his son's quick treatment of the events only reflects his limited view. A third and equally unsubstantiated possibility is that Heinrich von Haast knew all too well the details of his father's life before coming to New Zealand and smoothed them over to avoid embarrassment.

Heinrich von Haast's version of the story, published in 1948, remained the authority on the subject until Wolfhart Langer published 'Der Bonner Neuseelandforscher Sir Johann Franz Julius von Haast (1822-1887),' which appeared in a 1989 issue of *Bonner Geschichtsblätter*.<sup>37</sup> Written in German, *Bonner Geschichtsblätter* is not common reading in New Zealand. Colin Burrows has made Langer's findings better known to New Zealanders in his book *Julius Haast in the Southern Alps* (2005). In this later version, apart from the spelling of her name, there is one essential difference: 'In 1859, *after* Haast came to New Zealand, Antonie died

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> Langer, p. 277.

and Robert was raised by her parents.<sup>38</sup> Burrows' re-telling of this portion of Haast's life comes as a surprise to New Zealanders who are familiar with the von Haast version. If Langer is correct about the date on which Antonie died, then she was in fact still alive when Haast left Germany.

But what is the point in pausing to consider Haast's family life prior to arriving in New Zealand? Although his life in Europe is not directly related to the activities associated with the geological survey or the development of the Canterbury Museum, there is a pattern to his life in Europe that lends insight to the way Julius Haast worked in New Zealand. While he was married to Antonie and had a young son, it appears that Haast was away from home for extended periods of time. Given what little evidence that is known concerning what he did for a living, it is likely that his journeys to Italy, Austria, Russia and eventually New Zealand, were all necessary to his livelihood.<sup>39</sup> Antonie died on 14 October 1859, after Haast reached New Zealand, but it would have been months before he could have received word, his wife long since buried and his son taken into care by Antonie's parents. At the time of her death, Haast was in the middle of his survey of the Nelson Province after Hochstetter's departure. There is no record of Haast receiving word of his wife's death; therefore, it is impossible to determine his reaction and know if it had a bearing on his decision to stay in New Zealand. He may not have known that he was a widower when he entered into negotiations with Canterbury toward the end of 1859, but by the time he had examined Mt Pleasant for Moorhouse and agreed to undertake the geological survey of Canterbury, over a year past the time of Antonie's death, it is reasonable to expect that he would have received the news.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Burrows, p. 18. Italics are mine.

<sup>39</sup> von Haast, pp. 2-3; Burrows, p. 18.

<sup>40</sup> von Haast, pp. 120, 123. Haast delivered his report on Mt Pleasant on 19 January 1861. He became Canterbury's geologist on 15 February 1861.

There is no reason to believe that Haast had not left Germany in an honourable manner: when he married Mary Dobson, Rev Cotterill must have seen no reason not to join them in matrimony at St Mary's Church.<sup>41</sup> When Antonie's brother, Carl Schmitt who settled in Auckland, visited the Haast family in Christchurch, it was an occasion to play music together and sing.<sup>42</sup> During the exploration and mapping of the Nelson province Haast honoured his son, Robert, by giving his name to the first of many mountains that he would name.<sup>43</sup> When he met Robert again in Germany in 1886, they stayed up late into the night catching up. According to von Haast, Robert became an officer in the Prussian army and contemplated a number of times taking leave to visit his father in New Zealand, but always deciding against it because he spoke little English.<sup>44</sup>

The pattern of travelling for extended periods of time, being away from home continued into Haast's second marriage. The evidence for this is clearly related to his work as the Provincial Geologist. All of this indicates that Haast knew what he had to do to make a living and support his family. It follows then that the most probable reason for his staying in Canterbury was the family that he and Mary were establishing together. Haast's desire to maintain a home in Christchurch bolsters the argument that he intended to create a permanent position for himself at the museum after completion of the geological survey as an alternative to moving on to geological work in other districts.

Haast's marriage into the Dobson family is of major significance to this thesis as well: Edward Dobson, Mary's father, was the Provincial Engineer. When Haast went to Canterbury at the request of the superintendent, Mary's brother, Arthur, was

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<sup>41</sup> von Haast, pp. 321-2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 72-3.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 917-8.

appointed his assistant.<sup>45</sup> In keeping with what seems to be the norm for this generation, Arthur Dobson left no reflection of personal affection in his account of their work together. When he wrote his *Reminiscences* in 1930, Dobson strictly referred to Haast as ‘Dr von Haast’ and only described the nature of their work on the Port Hills and the Mackenzie Country.<sup>46</sup> Since Haast did not receive his PhD from Tübingen until 1862,<sup>47</sup> Dobson’s *reminiscences* were indeed retrospective. It can only be imagined then what kind of talk might have gone on between Haast and young Dobson for it was not long before they became brothers-in-law.

For Haast, starting over in New Zealand, especially in Canterbury, was an opportunity to be young again. His courtship and marriage to Mary Dobson might have raised a few eyebrows because of their age difference, he was forty-one and she just nineteen; but for all that was practical in his life at that time, he might as well have been twenty: his youthful outlook on life combined with the fact that he was indeed starting over (he had no property or wealth, only prospects and aspirations), made him the object of Mary’s affection rather than just a suitable older gentleman.

For the most part, Haast got along well with the people he worked and socialised with, though there were exceptions.<sup>48</sup> He did not embody the typical New Zealander’s mentality that Jack was as good as his master. Haast took for granted that as Provincial Geologist he should be given the respect that was due him. He was, after all, the ‘eminent geologist and savant.’<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>46</sup> Arthur Dudley Dobson, *Reminiscences of Arthur Dudley Dobson: Engineer 1841-1930*, 2d ed. (Auckland, 1930), pp. 32-3.

<sup>47</sup> Von Haast, p. 230.

<sup>48</sup> Burrows, p. 170.

<sup>49</sup> von Haast, p. 123.

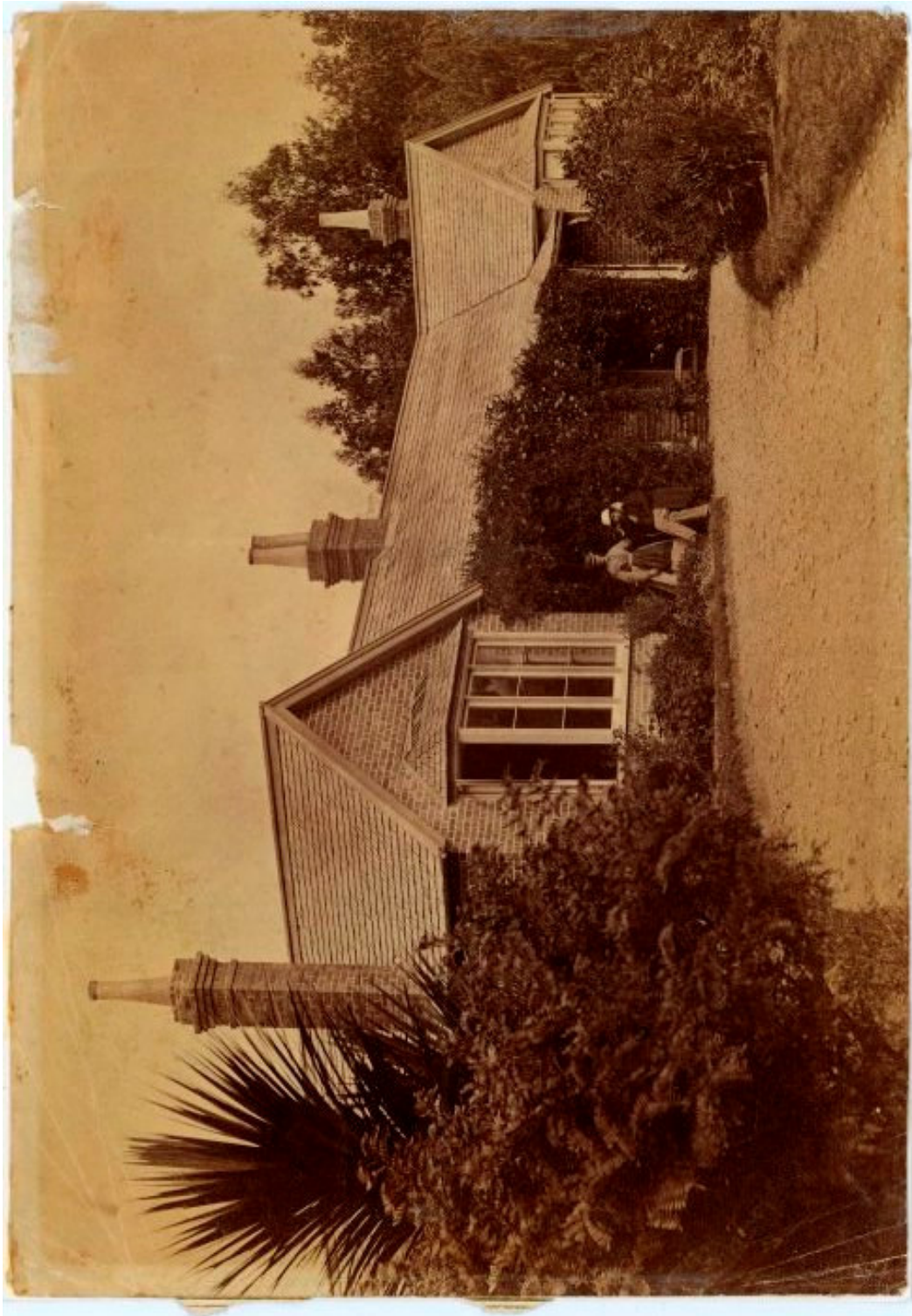


Plate 3



Julius and Mary Haast, circa 1865. Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/2-031387-F.

Plate 4



Julius and Mary Haast at home, circa 1860s.  
Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-5381-02

Julius Haast's earliest experiences in New Zealand affirmed his lifelong desire to see faraway places. He was a romantic whose visions of exploration were not disappointed when he actually went into uncharted territory. His life in New Zealand was all the more satisfying because of the contrast it offered against the life he had in Germany. Haast is literally an example of someone who was given a chance to do it all over again with the advantage of knowing so much more than he did the first time he set out to build a life.

His life in Germany was evidently unremarkable and to a great extent visited by misfortune. Every dream he had ever had for adventure, a career, a family and a home was never fully realised until he settled in New Zealand. There is every reason to believe that he strove for fulfilment of his hopes in Germany, but fate would not have it most of the time: the governments of the German states did not grant the revolutionaries constitutional reforms, the economy did not support a prosperous career and his marriage did not enjoy long life. At some point after arriving in New Zealand Haast consigned his life in Germany to the past. In the shorter version of his article on Sir Julius von Haast in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Wolfart Langer writes, 'Later in New Zealand Haast spared no effort in hushing up most of the events of his unsuccessful early life in Europe,' but he gives no evidence in support of his claim.<sup>50</sup> It is true that Haast left few references to his early life in Europe, but his reasons for doing so remain unknown. New Zealand became his home and his life. He could not have planned it that way from the outset, but opportunities presented themselves in time and Haast had the passion and self-awareness to seize the opportunities that put him in a position to gain what he really wanted out of life.

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<sup>50</sup> Langer, 'Haast, Sir (John Francis) Julius von (1822-1887), Geologist and Explorer,' in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 24 (2004), p. 380.

The honours and fame that would come to Haast at intervals throughout the rest of his life are directly related to his published scientific articles and reports and his work in building up the Canterbury Museum. In order to move toward a fuller appreciation of Julius Haast's life and work, he must be examined in greater detail in relation to the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury and the early development of the Canterbury Museum.

## Chapter 4

**Julius Haast and the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury**

This chapter explores Haast's considerable influence among a community of men who were interested in science, and how that influence resulted in the establishment and continuation of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury. Much of what is known about the early days of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury is an account from Julius Haast's own memory. The minutes of proceedings and other records of the first few years were lost, but Haast thought it important enough to write down and interesting enough to read at an Annual Meeting of the Institute.<sup>1</sup>

Before Julius Haast arrived in Christchurch there were already numerous persons interested in making the town a place of cultural distinction. There was a musical society, a book club and horticultural societies.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the idea of a learned society anything new to such men as the educated colonists of Christchurch, most of who referred to England as home. The Royal Society was established in 1660 and was followed by many other organisations including the Linnean Society (1788) and the Geological Society (1807).<sup>3</sup> For those who had been a long time in the colonies, there were as precedents: the Nelson Institute and in Wellington, the New Zealand Society founded in 1851. The Tasmanian Natural History Society, whose membership included William Colenso, Joseph Hooker and Governor George Grey as corresponding members, was older still and probably inspired the New Zealand

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<sup>1</sup> M. Mosley, *Illustrated Guide to Christchurch and Neighbourhood* (Christchurch, 1885), p. 97; *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* (hereafter TPRS NZ), vol. 15 (1882), p. 536.

<sup>2</sup> Paul, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Wolfe, *Moa: The Dramatic Story of the Discovery of a Giant Bird* (Auckland, 2003), p. 20.

Society's formation.<sup>4</sup> Thus the Philosophical Institute was established in the fashion of similar societies that came before it in other parts of the colony and other countries. Such societies, however, were British in origin, the Royal Society founded in 1660 being the first. How did Haast become so familiar with their workings? He may have been exposed to the Nelson Institute first hand and in his scientific capacity in Christchurch it is likely that he would have desired to read the *Transactions and Proceedings* of the Royal Society if he could obtain copies. In a period of less than four years Haast managed to marshal enough knowledge, enthusiasm and support to launch what would become a major learned society in New Zealand.

The Christchurch that Julius Haast came to in the early 1860s was ready for a scientific society of its own. While the Provincial Government invited Haast to Canterbury to conduct a geological survey in the hope of finding coal and gold, he was welcomed by the townspeople of Christchurch as a scientist who potentially offered more than mere geological reports.

His experiences in Auckland and Nelson with Hochstetter paved the way for his appointment as Provincial Geologist in Canterbury and he became the first permanently employed scientist in New Zealand.<sup>5</sup> This is precisely what set him apart from other men at the time who were just as, and often more so, academically qualified as he was.

A good example is William Thomas Lock Travers who settled in New Zealand in 1849. Though born in Ireland, He was raised in France where his father, Major General Boyle Travers, retired. W. T. L. Travers spent three years serving as an officer in the British Foreign Legion during the Spanish Carlist Wars before choosing to study law in London. After being admitted to the Bar in 1844, Travers practiced

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 60, 149; von Haast, p. 221.

<sup>5</sup> von Haast, p. 123.

law for five years before he and his wife, Jane, and their two children sailed for Nelson, New Zealand. Travers was in Nelson serving as resident magistrate when Haast and Hochstetter were busy mapping out the geology of that province. He had already engaged in explorations and is credited with the naming of many natural features. Travers gained a reputation as an ‘acute collector’ of plants, many of which were held in the herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.<sup>6</sup>

Travers moved his law practice to Christchurch and was among those whom Haast invited to a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a society for scientific and literary purposes in which individuals might be encouraged to present the results of their own observations and researches.<sup>7</sup>

There were, of course, others who were interested in science. Haast, by way of a circular dated 16 July 1862, invited them to a preliminary meeting to discuss the idea of forming a scientific society. Among those in attendance at the meeting held 24 July in Haast’s office were Bishop Harper, Justice Gresson, William S. Moorhouse, Dr A. C. Barker, John Bealey, Samuel Bealey, Edward Dobson, John Hall, T. W. Maude, H. J. Tancred, Travers and Dr Turnbull.<sup>8</sup> These were men of standing in the community. Haast gravitated toward Canterbury’s elite and, by virtue of his position as Provincial Geologist, counted himself among them.<sup>9</sup> But these men were busy with their careers; they were doctors, lawyers, Provincial Council members and Dobson was an engineer. Though they enjoyed the rewards of explorations and studies in natural history, they could only devote so much of their time to these pursuits. They made up a community of scientifically enthused men who were

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<sup>6</sup> Winsome Shepherd, ‘Travers, William Thomas Locke 1819-1903,’ in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. 1, pp. 547-8.

<sup>7</sup> Mosley, p. 97; von Haast, 221.

<sup>8</sup> von Haast, p. 221.

<sup>9</sup> Jim McAloon, ‘The Christchurch Elite,’ in John Cookson and Graeme Dunstall, eds., *Southern Capital, Christchurch: Towards a City Biography 1850-2000* (Christchurch, 2000), pp. 200-1.

willing to share their findings in the hope of making some contribution to the existing body of knowledge concerning the young colony. As the province's scientist, Julius Haast was able to facilitate the coming together of these men on common ground. Whether at the club, in the offices of the geological survey or just moving about town, Julius Haast had no shortage of opportunities to interact with men who were interested in his work. Many of them were also inclined to share with him their own scientific interests.<sup>10</sup>

There was a certain amount of enthusiasm for associating with Haast, not because he was then a great scientist, but rather because he was *their* scientist. As Provincial Geologist he, in a sense, worked for them and it was perceived that he would do the job that would help make a success of the province economically through geological discoveries (he represented the hope of finding gold and coal). Great things were expected of Haast and it was upon these hopes that others enthusiastically rode the scientific movement. Haast found himself at the core of this growing interest in things scientific and, as was his way in such matters, he made the most of the situation in which he found himself. Heinrich von Haast credits his father with founding the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, but it is more accurate to suggest that many of the leading men of Canterbury who were interested in science turned to Haast for leadership and offered him a position of prominence in establishing a scientific society of their own.

Reverend H. J. C. Harper was consecrated Bishop of Christchurch on Christmas day 1856. The appointment of a bishop in Christchurch was a direct result of the significant growth of the Church of England in New Zealand and its monetary fund. The demand for increased church accommodation in growing Christchurch

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<sup>10</sup> von Haast, pp. 138-70.



insured that the new bishop would become a central figure in the community.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, arranging for Harper to preside over the preliminary meeting where interested members of the community were asked to consider the possibility of forming a scientific society was a brilliant move on Haast's part: he was a trusted figure and his office suggests that he would have been skilled at presiding over public meetings. The apparent co-mingling of science and religion seems odd at first glance, however, Harper's keen interest was probably more closely associated with the educational aspirations of the Institute. Later, Haast and Harper would work together again toward forming the Canterbury Collegiate Union.<sup>12</sup>

Arguably, establishing the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, or influencing the other founding members to proceed with such an enterprise, was essential to ensuring Haast's future in Canterbury. The Philosophical Institute became the most visible and audible advocate for building a permanent museum.

With the first regular meeting of the Philosophical Institute, held 1 September 1862, came the election of officers and Haast was unanimously elected president.<sup>13</sup> Then, in what seems to have been a custom in those days, a dinner was thrown to celebrate the founding of the Philosophical Institute and to toast its future endeavours. As the new president, Haast delivered his inaugural address, which took an hour and a half, in which he outlined scientific research in New Zealand to date, explained the aims of the society and suggested topics they might consider pursuing.<sup>14</sup>

The content of Haast's address was indicative of the course that the Philosophical Institute would follow. He saw the erection of a museum as being a

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<sup>11</sup> Mosley, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> von Haast, pp. 614-5.

<sup>13</sup> Mosley, pp. 97-8.

<sup>14</sup> von Haast, pp. 222-5.

practical and necessary goal of the society.<sup>15</sup> Haast's vision and optimism for the scientific future of Canterbury was evident and his zeal quickly spread among the other members. There was a grand tone to his address that might have been intended to affirm the general feeling that Canterbury was superior to all other provinces. Canterbury was, after all, the best of New Zealand. If the smaller Nelson Institute could have its own museum, the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury would have a bigger and better one. This was not proposed as a goal in terms of a challenge, but rather it was simply assumed as a normal aspect of Canterbury society.

Haast would do more than just deliver his address to those gathered at the Royal Hotel. By this time he was in the habit of sending copies of his work to everyone he could think of. Naturally, Haast sent a copy of his Nelson report to Hochstetter: he had begun his scientific career under Hochstetter's supervision and his report was important to Hochstetter's study of New Zealand. He also sent copies to others (see Appendix 1).<sup>16</sup> In fact, Haast was well on his way to infiltrating an international network of scientists that had grown up largely as a result of the work produced by members of learned societies and international expeditions. His official work as a geologist and topographer gave him ample opportunities to make points with the big names in science. While, for example, it is not surprising that many countries have mountains named after Charles Lyell, the father of modern geology, Haast not only named 'some mountains and a river' after him, but then sent him copies of his reports as well.<sup>17</sup>

Becoming friends with Hochstetter not only created opportunities for Haast in New Zealand, it literally brought his name before the eyes of scientists around the world. Not only did Hochstetter detail the value of Haast's service to him in

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 224.

<sup>16</sup> von Haast, p. 111(n).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

Auckland and Nelson in his book *New Zealand: Its Physical Geography, Geology and Natural History*, but he was also most likely responsible for delivering Haast's Nelson report to the Royal Württemberg University of Tübingen where the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was then conferred upon him.<sup>18</sup> Haast knew very well how important the PhD could be to his career, but the reality of how valuable it was to know the right people was not lost on him, either.

The Philosophical Institute was for Haast the conduit by which he could formally communicate his admiration for men who were already in the circle that he wanted to join. He devoted a significant portion of his address to delivering an extremely favourable review of Darwin's revolutionary *Origin of Species*. He sent a copy of the address to Darwin who replied graciously.<sup>19</sup> Haast knew that Darwin, who had previously been to New Zealand, would have been interested in the work that the Philosophical Institute would produce. His reply to Haast made clear his hopes for the future of Canterbury's new scientific society.

Haast made sure he worked into his address a quotation from Joseph Hooker, too, referring to the interesting flora of the South Island.<sup>20</sup> Of all the people to whom Haast sent a copy of his address, Hooker would be the most important. Not only was it the start of a life-long friendship, but also Hooker was well connected in that worldwide network of scientists and he was a close personal friend of Charles Darwin. Darwin and Hooker represented a new generation of scientists who were introducing a recognised professionalism to the pursuit of science.<sup>21</sup> Like Darwin, Hooker had already been to New Zealand. As part of the *Erebus* Antarctic expedition of 1839-43, which spent three winters in parts of New Zealand, he became friends

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Darwin, Down, to Julius Haast, Christchurch, 22 January 1863, *Haast Family Papers*, MS-Papers-0037, Alexander Turnbull Library; von Haast, pp. 292-3.

<sup>20</sup> von Haast, p. 229.

<sup>21</sup> Wolfe, p. 208.

with William Colenso. Although he had not yet succeeded his father, William Hooker, as director of the Botanical Gardens at Kew, he was well on his way to becoming ‘the most highly honoured botanist in history.’<sup>22</sup>

Hooker was extremely interested in what Haast had to say about the newly founded Philosophical Institute of Canterbury. His own previous experience with scientific societies gave him the expertise to be able to give Haast some practical advice. This turned out to be the single most important exchange of ideas with regard to the relationship between the Philosophical Institute and the Canterbury Museum.

Hooker’s reply came with a warning that would shape Haast’s influence in the Philosophical Institute and in turn alter the direction in which the Institute worked toward its museum. In reply to Haast’s call for the erection of a museum, Hooker advised that the Institute not have one. Giving as an example Britain’s own Geological Society, he stated that it was ‘crushed down by its museum.’ He suggested instead that they throw their advice and support at the establishment of a public museum.<sup>23</sup>

That Haast took Hooker’s advice seriously can be seen in the efforts put forth by members of the Philosophical Institute in the years to follow. They boldly expressed their support by encouraging the Provincial Council in its contemplation of providing ‘additional accommodation for the Provincial Museum’ in an undated letter signed by several of their members (see Appendix 2).<sup>24</sup> A reference to a ‘period of very general depression’ makes it likely that this letter was written in 1867 when Provincial Councillors were reluctant to vote any large sum of money for anything

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Hooker, London, to Julius Haast, Christchurch, 1 February 1863, quoted in von Haast, pp. 229-30.

<sup>24</sup> Philosophical Institute of Canterbury to the Provincial Council of Canterbury, undated, Christchurch Regional Archives, CH 287, CP 633d/3. See Appendix 2.

other than much needed public works.<sup>25</sup> What is also interesting about this document is that Julius Haast's signature is conspicuously absent. He may have been away in the field, but would the other members have taken it upon themselves to make an attempt at influencing the Provincial Council? While they might have themselves been fully committed to the endeavour, Haast's leadership as president of the Institute is evident even if not as a signatory.

It is also conceivable that as the Council's scientific man, a government employee whose term was coming to an end, Julius Haast thought it better if members of the Council did not see his name on a petition in support of a public institution in which he himself hoped to find employment. By this time Haast had a huge personal investment in the prospect of a public museum in Christchurch. He had established himself as a naturalised British subject, started a family, gained international recognition as an explorer, geologist and natural historian. He had learned the ins and outs of Provincial politics as well as the business of buying, selling and exchanging specimens on the international market. If he were going to have a future in Canterbury, the province would have to have a museum of sufficient size and funding to require a full-time paid curator.

As late as 1868, however, there were still references to 'the Museum of the Institute' in its laws as published in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* where it also stated that the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury devoted one-third of all its revenue to the museum.<sup>26</sup> It is evident that a museum was an important objective of the Philosophical Institute. It is also noteworthy that the mission of the Philosophical Institute was important to local Freemasons. There were numerous members of the Institute who were Freemasons

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<sup>25</sup> von Haast, p. 491.

<sup>26</sup> *TPRSNZ* 1 (1868): xvi.

besides Haast including William Donald, Cyrus Davie, John Ollivier and W. S. Moorhouse, who was the Institute's patron while superintendent of the province. The fact that, along with Haast, so many other Freemasons were involved in the formation of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury is significant because of the common goals between Freemasonry and the Philosophical Institute. Each Freemason is admonished to explore creation and unlock the hidden mysteries of nature and science. In his first address to members and supporters of the Philosophical Institute, Haast called for the establishment of an Acclimatization Society, a museum, a laboratory and an observatory for astronomical and meteorological observation.<sup>27</sup>

Freemasonry in New Zealand has a well-established history of contributing to research and the pursuit of science. Sir George Grey, a celebrated figure in Masonic history, was the first president of the Wellington Philosophical Society in 1851 while he was governor.<sup>28</sup> He is noted for his contributions to science and study of Maori language and mythology.<sup>29</sup> It is not surprising that Freemasons were prominent in the learned societies of New Zealand because that was precisely the case with the Royal Society in London. In fact, the Royal Society was founded in the aftermath of the English Civil War by Freemasons who came together from both sides (Royalists and Parliamentarians) for the advancement of scientific research in a society free of political or religious debate.<sup>30</sup>

Freemasonry represents a link between Haast and some influential members of the community. The Philosophical Institute of Canterbury was not an instrumentality

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<sup>27</sup> von Haast, pp. 224-5.

<sup>28</sup> *TPRSNZ* 80 (1952): p. 359.

<sup>29</sup> N. S. Whiley, 'Sir George Grey, Soldier, Statesman and Freemason,' *United Masters Lodge* 34:13 (2003): p. 199.

<sup>30</sup> Alex Davidson, 'The Royal Society and Freemasonry,' *United Masters Lodge* 35:3 (2004): p. 34; for a full account see Robert Lomas, *The Invisible College: The Royal Society, Freemasonry and the Birth of Modern Science* (London: Headline, 2002).

of the Freemasons' Lodge, but it provided an opportunity for expression of scientific interests that were common to Freemasons. Haast was able to relate to others in a similar way; his interest in music, literature and art was a source of common ground. The Philosophical Institute was founded not only for 'the advancement of Science,' but also 'Literature, and the Arts as well as the development of the resources of the Province.'<sup>31</sup>

Through the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, Haast was able to influence its members, the wider community and the Provincial Government. The Philosophical Institute, by way of its published *Transactions*, helped Haast gain an international reputation as a legitimate authority in the areas of geology, natural history, palaeontology and ethnology. Among those scientists most interested in Haast's research was Richard Owen. Owen was already famous for his pioneer work in identifying fossil remains of the giant extinct birds of New Zealand, though he had never been to New Zealand himself. Geologists, missionaries and others who collected moa bones and sent them to him in London made his ascent to the pinnacle of moa research possible.<sup>32</sup>

Ruth Barton has examined in greater detail the relationship between Haast and Owen. Barton gains an advantage of perspective over von Haast by emphasising the relationship between interpreters at the centres of imperial science, such as Owen, and the collectors of specimens in the colonial periphery.<sup>33</sup> Her research has led to the conclusion that Haast claimed that his own interpretations were credible and that he had an advantage over Owen because, being in New Zealand, he was able to examine the remains of moa bones 'in situ.' Haast was compelled to correct Owen's taxonomy

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<sup>31</sup> von Haast, p. 221.

<sup>32</sup> Ruth Barton, 'Haast and the Moa: Reversing the Tyranny of Distance,' *Pacific Science*, Vol. 54, no. 3 (2000), pp. 251-2

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252

because he possessed knowledge that Owen did not have.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, because moa were unique to New Zealand, they could be classified in New Zealand, and since they could not be sent to London without some loss, New Zealand could become the centre of calculation.<sup>35</sup>

Heinrich Von Haast did note the importance of Haast's relationship with Owen, but he did not take it far enough to identify the established practice of colonial collectors deferring to London. He pointed out that Haast disagreed with some of Owen's interpretations, but he put so much effort into establishing Haast's greatness by associating him with the great scientist that he failed to notice when Haast reversed the process and caused Owen to admit that Haast was first in line to take over his position of prominence in studying the extinct birds of New Zealand.<sup>36</sup> Barton explains that Haast was able to break free from the model of 'dependent, deferential colonial science at the periphery and imperial, theoretical science at the [centres] of calculation' because he had multiple metropolitan links and inter-colonial relationships; he was German, naturalised-British and received almost all of his scientific education in New Zealand, much of which he owed to Hochstetter in Vienna.<sup>37</sup>

Ultimately, the Philosophical Institute allowed Haast to become recognised as a scientist beyond the scope of his employment and, by influencing the government in hastening the establishment of the Canterbury Museum, it effectively provided the means and incentive to keep him in Christchurch after completion of the geological survey.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 258-9

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 252, 261

<sup>36</sup> von Haast, pp. 692-3; Barton, pp. 251, 259.

<sup>37</sup> Barton, p. 252.



Plate 5



Julius Haast and Frederick Fuller with moa bones, circa 1866.  
Alexander Turnbull Library, PAColl-5381-0

## Chapter 5

### **Haast's Museum**

This study is less concerned with the technical aspects of building up the collections and developing the museum itself than with the concept of a public museum in Christchurch, what it meant to Haast and how he made the transition from Provincial Geologist to Director of the Canterbury Museum. Therefore, what follows is not a retelling of the history of the Canterbury Museum, but rather a closer look at some of the steps Haast took toward raising support for the museum in order to ascertain his motives in doing so. The museum is the most significant factor in understanding the life of Julius Haast. His beginnings in Germany, his adventures and explorations, his scientific work as a geologist and topographer, his research, collecting, writing and his extensive involvement with the broad social strata of Canterbury culminate in the establishment and development of the Canterbury museum. It is appropriate that the museum be regarded as 'his lasting monument' as stated by the Board of Governors, not because it is a visible edifice that he is credited with establishing, but because so much of his life was devoted to what the museum represents, namely science and education. The Canterbury Museum could not have been built by 1870 if not for the public support engineered by Haast and the Philosophical Institute under his influence. The museum would have been built eventually, but its timing was essential in the narrative of Haast's career.

Like the early history of the Philosophical Institute, that of the Canterbury Museum has been preserved in some detail largely because Julius Haast wrote it down. On 16 June 1881 in an address to the Philosophical Institute, Haast read, 'The Origin and Early Progress of the Canterbury Museum.' It was then published in

*Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand*.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise, the early history of the Canterbury Museum can only be traced by sifting through Heinrich von Haast's detailed account of the activities associated with the museum or the local newspapers. Heinrich von Haast's account depicts a huge treasure built up almost single-handedly by his father and left to the people of Canterbury who should appreciate what they have been given. Sally Burrage has undertaken archival research toward documenting the early exchanges carried out by Julius Haast in building up the collections of the Canterbury Museum.<sup>2</sup>

Heinrich von Haast noted the difficulty his father had with the attitudes of some critics toward his work as a geologist *and* collector.<sup>3</sup> Ruth Barton notes the 'period of worrying uncertainty' suffered by Haast in 1867 toward the end of the geological survey over the fact that he was soon to be out of a job. Since the history of the Canterbury Museum lies outside the scope of her research, she only suggests that the Provincial Government's decision to build a museum and hire Haast as its first director was a fortunate turn of events for him.<sup>4</sup> Heinrich von Haast's interpretation is more dramatic and will be examined in this chapter.

In order to appreciate Haast's actions around the time that the geological survey was drawing to a close, it is important to have an idea of what he must have perceived to be a likely future for himself in Christchurch. In order to do this it is essential to grasp some understanding of how the concept of what became the Canterbury Museum evolved in his mind; and in reality how the institution itself developed on the stages of Canterbury's social and political theatres.

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<sup>1</sup> Julius von Haast, 'Art. LXXVIII, - Origin and Early History of the Canterbury Museum: Being the Annual Address,' *TPRSNZ* 14 (1881), pp. 503-16.

<sup>2</sup> For example see Sally Burrage, 'Exchange of Native Bird Skins, Skeletons and Eggs by the Canterbury Museum from 1869-1913,' *Records of the Canterbury Museum* Vol. 15, pp. 1-7.

<sup>3</sup> von Haast, p. 245

<sup>4</sup> Barton, pp. 255-6

The first recorded reference to a museum in Christchurch is a site reserved for such on the plan drawn by Edward Jollie in 1850.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly enough, the museum was built in 1869-70 on the exact location forecasted by the original plan, while other endeavours such as the botanical gardens eventuated in areas not consistent with the original plan (see figure 1).<sup>6</sup> By August of 1859 it is evident that a number of people were still holding to the idea: at a meeting of the Colonial Society presided over by Dr William Donald, a resolution was passed favouring the establishment of a natural history museum.<sup>7</sup> It may only be a coincidence, but late in 1859, while he was still working in Nelson, Julius Haast suggested the possibility of arranging rocks and ores that he would obtain while making a geological survey of Canterbury ‘in the form of a geological museum.’<sup>8</sup>

Although Haast did not introduce the idea of a museum to Canterbury, he did identify strongly with local enthusiasm and was able to make its cause central to his work. There was also a worldwide network of scientists and agents already in place who provided resources and ideas when Haast became actively involved in the movement to establish a museum.

Like the Philosophical Institute, the museum had its precedents both in New Zealand and England. Already noted, the Nelson Institute had a museum since 1842, although it was merely a collection held within the Institute and not an institution in its own right. Auckland, on the other hand, established its museum in 1852.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Lochhead, p. 262

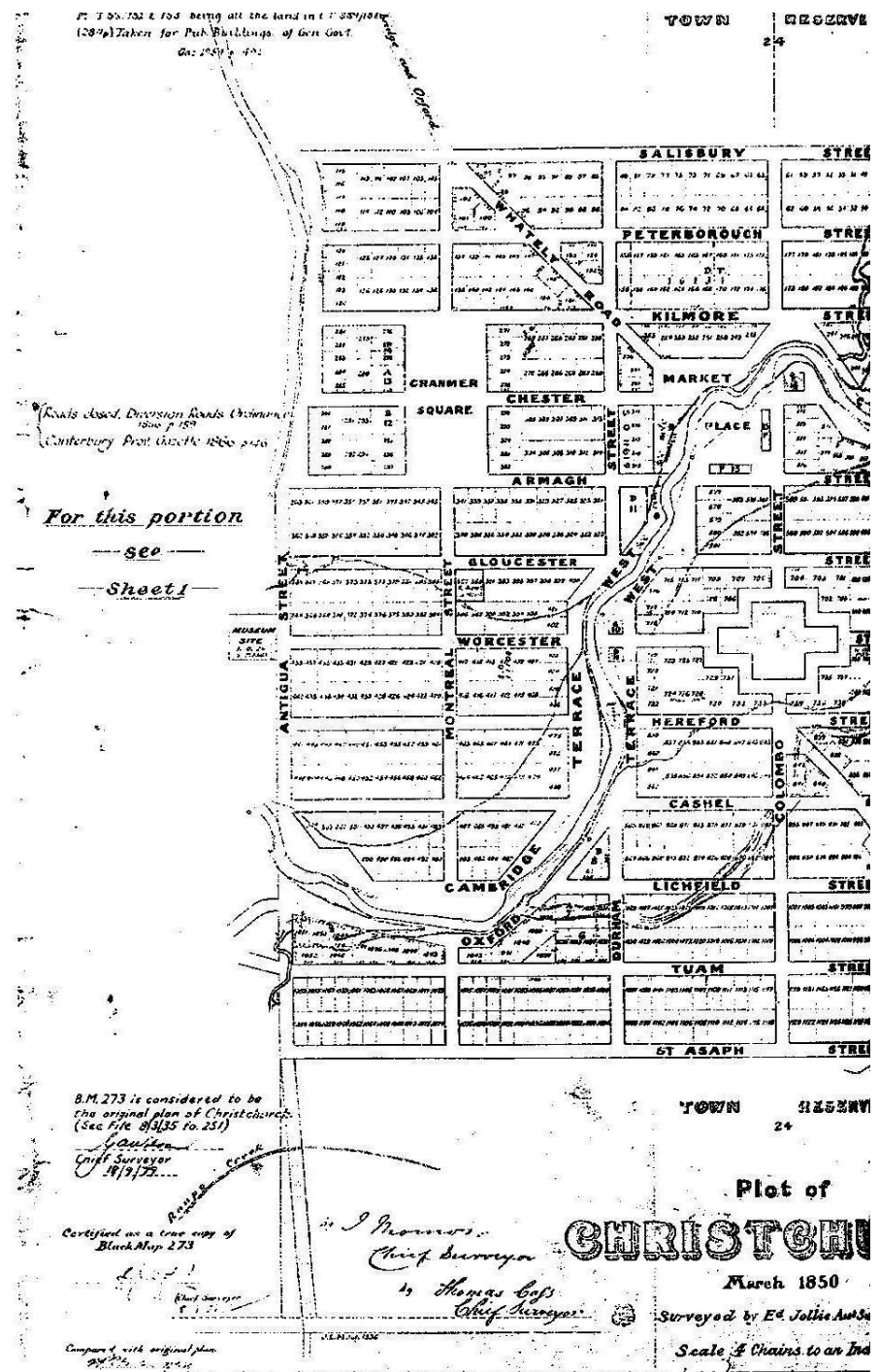
<sup>6</sup> Map of Christchurch drawn by Edward Jollie, 1850.

<sup>7</sup> Henry F. Wigram, *The Story of Christchurch, New Zealand* (Christchurch: The Lyttelton Times Co. Ltd., 1916), 163.

<sup>8</sup> R.J.S. Harman to William S. Moorhouse, 14 December 1859, quoted in von Haast, 113.

<sup>9</sup> Wolfe, 149; von Haast, 173(n).

Figure 1



Excerpt, Plot of Christchurch, March 1850, drawn by Edward Jollie. New Zealand Department of Lands and Survey. 'Museum Site' at end of Worcester Street.

Although Canterbury's movement toward having a museum trailed the other provinces, its real motivation and model was England. From the beginning, the Canterbury Association sought in Christchurch to emulate the English country town by building churches, schools and civic facilities after the English community model.<sup>10</sup> This explains the comprehensiveness of the original town plan of 1850 drawn by Jollie. What Haast found in Christchurch was a community already primed to react favourably to his ideas about a museum. The associations that availed themselves immediately to Haast upon his arrival could have only reinforced his determination. There were already museum supporters among the members of the Christchurch Club and the lodge of Freemasons. If Haast arrived without any preconceptions about a future museum, he quickly adopted the pre-existing thought patterns of the locals.

Dr William Donald was arguably an influential figure in this respect; his leadership qualities are well documented. As president of the Colonists' Society, he had already demonstrated his support for a natural history museum. He was the first medical practitioner in Canterbury, having arrived in 1849, making him for some settlers the only doctor ever consulted in New Zealand. Of particular note with regard to his support for the museum early on is the fact that he is listed as one of the great Freemason leaders of Canterbury, having risen to the office of District Grand Master in 1868 and remaining so until his death in 1884.<sup>11</sup>

That Haast was a romantic who believed each exploration would reveal wonders never before seen by man is evident in the way he rallied enthusiasts to the cause of building a museum. That he was a devoted Freemason is evident by the number of brother Masons who encouraged him in this pursuit. But Haast was also a

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<sup>10</sup> John Cookson, 'Pilgrims' Progress,' in *Southern Capital*, John Cookson and Graeme Dunstall, eds. (Christchurch, 2000), p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> Hewland, p. 68.

government employee, and while his work did not necessarily entail an emphasis on a museum, he certainly incorporated it into his duties. In a slight breach of etiquette early in his tenure, he wrote to the Provincial Superintendent, William Sefton Moorhouse, reminding him of a conversation they had in Nelson after arrangements were made for Haast to survey Canterbury. Haast's optimism is apparent:

...all my collections, during this time will be property of the Province which will form the nucleus of the future provincial museum and that I shall exchange with other museums, so that when my work is finished there will be besides maps some thing which will prove highly advantageous to the intellectual development of the inhabitants as well as to the material development of the resources of the province. If some thing can be done toward the creation of a provincial museum for which many gentlemen are willing to subscribe considerable sums and you think it well to give your assent to its creation, I am willing to take gratuitously its custody and to hand over all my valuable collections, which I made during the last two years in New Zealand and at the same time I am ready to deliver here and in Lyttelton every winter three lectures in a popular forum, illustrated with large diagrams, the proceeds of which will be entirely [distributed to its formation.]<sup>12</sup>

If nothing else, Haast would learn over the next several years that regardless of what is discussed by friends in private, the wheels of government turn slowly. It did not take long for him to realize that getting the Provincial Government to build a museum was not so different from getting them to dig a rail tunnel through a mountain. Before he could make any progress with the government, he would have to have the backing of more influential members of Canterbury society.

Haast's bold proposal to the superintendent could not have been a confidential communiqué and most likely was not thought up on his own. The push for a museum

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<sup>12</sup> Julius Haast to the Superintendent, Christchurch, 18 June 1861, File 986(2)/1865, ICPW 2475/1876, Box CP287, CRA.

was a collective enterprise such that Haast was encouraged to become champion of a cause already in motion. Enough support already existed in the Provincial Government to the degree that early in 1862 £100 was approved 'for the purchase of type collections in mineralogy, lithology, palæontology, and conchology, which were obtained from the Mineralien Comtoir, in Heidelberg, Germany.'<sup>13</sup> This no doubt was thought to be an important aid in carrying out the geological survey, but it was spun in the *Lyttelton Times* on 29 January 1862 to garner public interest for a museum. The *Times* gave a detailed account of exchanges already underway and mentioned the names of the prominent scientists and collectors engaged in the exchanges. There is room to debate when the Canterbury Museum actually began, but it is certain to have become a collection with a life of its own in response to the *Times*' appeal for donations following the report on the first contribution to the museum, an herbarium from England that had been obtained in exchange for an herbarium of New Zealand flora. The public was enlisted to contribute to the collections, thus beginning the tide of specimens that poured in from every corner and caused for the Provincial Government exactly what Haast, along with his corroborators and followers, intended. The public developed an expectation that their government would provide for them the means by which they might have access to 'an abundant source of intellectual recreation.' It is also noted 'Mr Haast has given his entire New Zealand collection for the same purpose.'<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to von Haast's view that the Canterbury Museum was built almost single-handedly by his father, all evidence points to the fact that the museum was actually built upon a foundation of public enthusiasm. This article in the *Lyttelton Times* is of particular significance because it is the first time Julius Haast used the

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<sup>13</sup> Julius von Haast, 'Origin and Early History,' *TPRSNZ* 14 (1881), p. 504.

<sup>14</sup> *Lyttelton Times* (hereafter *Times*), 29 January 1862, p. 4.



power of the press to carry his views as if they were the views and wishes of the general public. Whether the *Lyttelton Times* went to Haast for the story, or Haast took the story to them, it is apparent that the information could only have come from him: 'We hear that Mr. Haast has also been promised extensive collections from Australia as exchanges, and hopes to be thus enabled, at comparatively little cost, to get together the nucleus of a good museum...' <sup>15</sup> Heinrich von Haast recognised his father's cooperative relationship with the newspapers. Items in the *Lyttelton Times* appear to have been prepared by Haast or at least dictated by him. *The Press* appears to have retained more control over what it printed, discussing the issues with Haast and then writing their own material. <sup>16</sup> On an official level, information concerning the arrangement of specimens and a detailed list of donors is included in Haast's report dated 9 October 1870. <sup>17</sup> The list of donors and their varied contributions to the collections belonging to the province illustrate the notion that while the Canterbury Museum was built by the Provincial Government, its soul was created in the hearts and minds of the people of Canterbury. Men, women and children are credited with donating everything from seashells to human skulls.

The museum was alive, at least in the minds of people who looked forward to seeing the collections and those who happily donated items. In reality, the museum was little more than a topic for conversation. It consisted of rocks, bones, dead birds, fossils and other curious items. In fairness, though, seeing such items arranged in an orderly fashion and accompanied by explanations of their significance in 1862 would have indeed been a source of intellectual stimulation, especially for the many who had never seen the like.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. For example, Haast used the word 'nucleus' to describe the initial collections of the Canterbury Museum on various occasions such as in 'Origin and Early History.'

<sup>16</sup> von Haast, p. 395.

<sup>17</sup> Julius Haast, 'List of Donations to the Canterbury Museum, Christchurch,' 9 October 1870 in *New Zealand Government Gazette, Canterbury Province*, 1870.

Thus began Haast's campaign in the public spotlight to persuade the Provincial Government to provide accommodation for a museum. As he learned more about the workings of the government, however, he found that it would take more than just an interested public to move the Provincial Councillors to spend money. Over the next six years Haast waged his battles on three fronts: public opinion, science and politics. He sought public support by way of social interaction with key figures in the community and by feeding information to the *Lyttelton Times*. *The Press* was also interested in Haast's efforts and supported a public museum, but the editor, J. V. Colborne-Veel, preferred to write his own story after consultation rather than simply allowing Haast to provide copy.<sup>18</sup> On the scientific front, Haast used the Philosophical Institute and his correspondence with other scientists to attest to the importance of a museum.

The third front, where Haast had the most difficulty, was political and in the end, it all came down to money. Haast was either under the impression that he was hired to do more than conduct a geological survey and prepare topographical maps, or he assumed that the Provincial Government would be happy with the additional contributions he was making to science and the provincial collections.<sup>19</sup> Heinrich von Haast has argued that the terms of Haast's contract were very loose and led to misunderstandings.<sup>20</sup> It is not surprising, however, that Haast faced adversity from some members of the Provincial Council since he originally estimated two years to complete the survey, but by 1864 he told them that it could not be completed before 1867.<sup>21</sup> This, along with repeated requests for the funding of museum activities that

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<sup>18</sup> von Haast, p. 395.

<sup>19</sup> Haast was supported in thinking that his additional contributions were valued, but there was sufficient opinion to the contrary to cause public debate: *Times*, 20 May, 1 April, 14 October 1863.

<sup>20</sup> von Haast, pp. 193-8, 454-5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 369.

were not associated with the geological survey, raised questions as to just what the government was paying for.

At the beginning of the geological survey Haast wrote to Professor McCay in Melbourne, a noted palaeontologist, asking if he would be available to write up descriptions of any fossils that Haast might find during the course of his work in Canterbury. He suggested that McCay could keep a selection of the fossils for the Melbourne Museum, but before the end of 1863 Haast asked the government for £150 to pay for McCay's printing of plates.<sup>22</sup> He made frequent requests for funds to pay such expenses as display cases and taxidermy services.<sup>23</sup> When the Provincial Government hired R. L. Holmes to serve as Provincial Meteorologist Haast brokered a deal where Holmes would also assume the duties of 'custos or clerk' for the museum. He constructed the proposition as an opportunity for the Provincial Councillors to provide someone who could not only assist with the arrangement of the collections, but also make them available to interested members of the public when Haast was in the field. Haast also made it clear that the 'scientific superintendence' would remain in his hands.<sup>24</sup>

Having an assistant was of great value to Haast, but it did little toward making the collections available to the public. The real problem was space. Most of the collections were boxed up in crates and inaccessible. This, too, was part of Haast's plan of action in pressing the Provincial Government toward building a museum. The collections were considered to be of great value. The small amounts of money that Haast managed to get out of the government at regular intervals eventually amounted to a significant investment. The Provincial Council began to feel the pressure: what

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<sup>22</sup> Haast to Provincial Secretary, 27 October 1863; 3 December 1863, CRA.

<sup>23</sup> Haast to Provincial Secretary for Public Works, John Hall, 25 July 1865; 13 September 1865; 11 December 1865, CRA.

<sup>24</sup> Haast to Provincial Secretary, 14 December 1863, CRA.

was the wisdom of investing so much money and resources in the provincial collections only to store them away? John Hall, the Provincial Secretary, suggested renting ‘some room in the town apart from the Govt Buildings.’<sup>25</sup> The answer Haast and his supporters wanted, however, was a new museum building.

The argument played out in *The Press* on 24 September 1864 even to the point of favouring the building of a museum over the continued expense of the geological survey.<sup>26</sup> This rather over-shot the mark that Haast was trying to hit since he really felt the geological survey was essential and of great scientific importance. He also continually demonstrated that the geological survey (its findings, specimens and topographical maps) was a main source of items for the museum. *The Press* must have felt it had done the job, for in October the executive council authorized a call for designs for a new museum and offered a premium of £50 to the best design.<sup>27</sup> It appeared that the Provincial Government was enthusiastic about taking steps toward building a museum—they even formed a committee to decide on the winning design.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately for those who watched in anticipation, it would take several years for anything to happen because, out of the six entries, the three that were ‘worthy of consideration’ raised more questions regarding style, location, materials and costs.<sup>29</sup> In 1865 Haast informed the Provincial Council that the collections of the geological survey had grown so much that he needed more space to be able to work out his field labours. He requested more space for his work and storage, and then proceeded to offer a plan for building a museum at a cost of about £1500. He also suggested that it ‘would be a great boon not only for the advancement of science, but

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<sup>25</sup> John Hall to Julius Haast, 14 May 1864, Haast Family Papers, MS-Papers-0037, Alexander Turnbull Library.

<sup>26</sup> *The Press* (hereafter *Press*), 24 September 1864, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 18 October 1864, CP349a, CRA; *Press*, 3 November 1864, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Minutes of the Executive Council, 3 January 1865, 19 January 1865, CP373, CRA.

<sup>29</sup> Lockhead, p. 263.

also for the instruction and amusement of the inhabitants and visitors of this province, for which always well deserved credit has been given to it.<sup>30</sup>

Moorhouse had resigned in 1863 so Samuel Bealey was superintendent during the design competition. Haast may have felt like he had to explain everything again. However, Moorhouse and Ollivier maintained a great deal of influence over Bealey so there was a certain amount of continuity in the Provincial Government before Moorhouse became superintendent again in 1866.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, Haast was frustrated by the delays in getting his museum. He continued to press the Provincial Council and the papers continued the campaign with former Superintendent J. E. Fitzgerald joining in with some thoughts of his own, calling for a museum that represented the best in architecture.<sup>32</sup>

Haast's impatience appeared to be unreasonable as the government might have been seen as making progress toward his desired goal, yet by 1867 there was still no accommodation for the museum collections. Some members of the council were calling for a speedy conclusion to the geological survey and Haast set before them his terms. He stated that he would complete the geological survey 'before the end of June 1868, and to arrange, classify, and catalogue the provincial collections in a building to be erected by the Provincial Government before the end of this year.' He stipulated that any time spent on 'extra work not contemplated in the geological survey' would extend this date.<sup>33</sup> The council accepted his terms, but would not make a commitment to build a museum. Instead, they advised him that they would provide 'suitable accommodation for the arrangement of the specimens.'<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Haast to Secretary for Public Works, 19 September 1865, CP, CRA.

<sup>31</sup> Gardner, pp. 106-7.

<sup>32</sup> Lockhead, p. 262.

<sup>33</sup> Julius Haast, 'Copy Contract for the Completion of the Geological Survey of the Province By Dr. Haast,' Session 26, No. 46, 5 March 1867, CP, CRA.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Beswick to Julius Haast, 16 April 1867, CP, CRA.

After arranging suitable accommodation (in some rooms in the Provincial Government Building vacated for Haast's use) the Provincial Council, by way of a letter from the Provincial Secretary for Public Works, F. E. Stewart, asked Haast whether 'throwing open to the public at certain stated times during the week the collections under [his] charge' would interfere with his work.<sup>35</sup> The fact that the Canterbury Museum was first opened up to the public in some rooms of the Provincial Government Buildings is well known. Less well known is the degree to which Haast became frustrated in the days leading up to it. He replied to Stewart's letter on 25 June 1867 making it clear that he was not pleased with the arrangement. Haast stated that because he had for three years expected a museum to be built, he had continued collecting, exchanging and purchasing specimens to the point that his rooms were over crowded. It was not advisable, he insisted, to allow the public unreserved admittance; they would never benefit from seeing them in their present setting. He suggested that he could remove his office work to some rooms in the cottage that he was using for some displays, and then use his office and the smoking room for the museum. He also made a point of there being no wall space—a reminder that some had complained of not being able to see the maps he produced. He assured them that he would be willing to provide whatever services their arrangement would require and that he would be delighted if the public could be permitted to see even a fraction of the collections.<sup>36</sup>

By 28 November the museum displays were set up in two different sections of the Provincial Government Buildings. Again, Haast lamented the lack of wall space

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<sup>35</sup> F. E. Stewart to Julius Haast, 21 June 1867, CP, 629a/18-Provincial Geologist, CRA.

<sup>36</sup> Haast to Secretary for Public Works, 25 June 1867, CP, CRA.

for maps. The exhibit consisted mainly of geological and botanical collections in his old offices and moa (*dinornis*) skeletons in the coffee rooms.<sup>37</sup>

The museum was a huge success. As usual, the *Lyttelton Times* ran its story with Haast's input, resulting in a style that suggested the writer was scientifically knowledgeable. The *Times*' review ran on the day the museum opened, 3 December 1867, further suggesting that information was received in advance. *The Press* reported its own findings on the following day, reflecting more the experience a visitor could expect to have. The *Times* article included a lengthy justification of the time and money invested in the geological survey, giving as evidence a detailed description of the collections available for viewing—only a fraction of what was produced by the survey.<sup>38</sup> With this victory on the public relations front, the *Times* continued its emphasis on the need for a permanent museum. On 30 December the *Times* identified the museum as 'a step towards establishing in the province a permanent institution for instruction in the higher branches of education' and it pushed further by suggesting that the council chambers might serve a better purpose if used as the new museum.<sup>39</sup>

In 1868 Moorhouse again resigned and William Rolleston became superintendent.<sup>40</sup> In Rolleston, Haast and the museum supporters found a sympathetic patron, not unlike Moorhouse and Bealey before him. Still, Canterbury during the Provincial Government era operated under the guise of 'responsible government' in which the Superintendent and the Executive Council depended on approval from the Provincial Council for funds. Thus, von Haast explains, approval to build a museum

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 28 November 1867.

<sup>38</sup> *Times*, 3 December 1867, p. 2; *Press*, 4 December 1867.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 30 December 1867.

<sup>40</sup> Gardner, pp. 249-52; von Haast, p. 538.

was held up for six years by an opposition majority.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, von Haast's examination of the political events relating to the building of the museum and the termination of the geological survey are not critical enough to give a balanced account. He has cast the Council members who were in opposition to spending money on Haast's activities and a museum as being the enemies of science and short sighted.

An example of von Haast's bias is his view of W. T. L. Travers. According to von Haast, Travers was a great friend of Haast's whom he had known from Nelson. Travers had helped him with buying his first house in Christchurch and was a founding member of the Philosophical Institute, a fine explorer, collector and amateur scientist himself.<sup>42</sup> Although they had at times disagreed on scientific matters, Julius Haast's relationship with Travers did not begin to deteriorate until after Travers was elected to the Provincial Council in 1867. This of course was a critical year in the debate surrounding the building of a museum. Travers, with his military background and law career, took fiscal responsibility seriously. According to von Haast, Haast was offended by Travers's recommendation that his contract become more formal and that he account for all the money spent on the geological survey.<sup>43</sup> The problem with von Haast's interpretation is that he fails to acknowledge Travers's consistency with which he expected financial accountability from all government departments. It was typical of Travers during his term on the Provincial Council to want to know where the money was going. On 25 June 1867 not only did he move in the Council for returns showing what Julius Haast was spending money on, but he also moved for a return showing the debentures negotiated under the Lyttelton and Christchurch railway loan. Then he moved that nothing from the table be printed in the papers

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<sup>41</sup> von Haast, pp. 197-8

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 29, 83, 221, 270, 323, 353-4

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 522-3.



without the leave of the Speaker. Travers was a lawyer and insisted on accountability with public funds. Nor was he heartless: at the same meeting he asked ‘Whether the Government are prepared to afford any relief to one William Jones, who lost his eyesight on the works of the West coast road, owing to the use of improper tools’<sup>44</sup>

Heinrich von Haast had a tendency to view everything in terms of how it related to his father’s work and hopes for a museum. This not only reveals his own bias, but also emphasises the fact that what he wrote about men like Travers was taken outside the parameters of correct historical context. Since the evidence shows that Travers had a keen interest in science, was a founding member of the Philosophical Institute and, early on, a friend who helped Haast purchase his first house in Christchurch, it does not follow that he was an enemy of science and the museum only because as a Provincial Councillor he was concerned about how public money was being spent. It is true that Julius Haast worked hard to achieve the desired outcome of his goal for a museum and he is recognised for his contribution, but in his attempt to honour his father’s memory, von Haast did him little service by suggesting that the Provincial Council should have given Haast every manner and method of support because his work was directed toward the advancement of science and education. In doing so he regarded as irrelevant the hard work, judgement and concerns of others. Before Canterbury could build a permanent museum, it had to go through a process of planning and allocating public funds.

By the end of December 1868 the Provincial Council finally approved not only funding for a museum building, but also salary for a director. Naturally, Haast was offered the position of Director of the Canterbury Museum and Hochstetter wrote,

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<sup>44</sup> *Press*, 25 June 1867.

‘Your future is now safe.’<sup>45</sup> This would appear to be a revealing piece of correspondence. It is likely that Haast would have kept Hochstetter informed throughout the years of his work toward building a museum. Heinrich von Haast would not admit to his father’s having planned his own future so well and played it down by suggesting that Haast was still feeling uncertain. His reason being that before this exchange of letters Haast had considered taking his talents to Europe (Austria or Germany) or Australia. He had made inquiries with Frederick Weld, the governor of Western Australia, as to the possibilities of finding geological work there. His correspondence with Weld carried over into 1870, even after Haast was appointed director of the museum, but in the end Haast passed up the possibility. The fact that he considered other possibilities for work does not imply that he was frustrated with the Provincial Government as suggested by von Haast. Even before this, Hochstetter advised him against moving his family to Austria or Germany for several reasons: the cost of living was very high in Austria, his children would have greater opportunities growing up in New Zealand and it was obvious to him that Haast’s affection and life’s work were in New Zealand. Heinrich von Haast repeatedly comments on the subject of the lack of appreciation shown his father and how he contemplated leaving Canterbury. His point: Canterbury came very close to losing one of its most valuable members of society.<sup>46</sup> This is an example of how von Haast tended to dramatise the events concerning his father. Haast was too close to realising his dream of having his own museum. Control of the provincial collections was always an issue for him and he would not have easily turned them over to the custody of someone else. In an effort to maintain his standing, he offered his services as honorary director or curator

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<sup>45</sup> Hochstetter to Haast, 3 May 1869, quoted in von Haast, p. 564.

<sup>46</sup> von Haast, pp. 564-5.

of the museum in July of 1868.<sup>47</sup> This also furthered his prospects for being officially named director and paid for it when the time came.

After his appointment as director of the museum, Haast never really considered leaving Christchurch. He did, however, accept regional work offered to him by Hector for the Geological Survey of New Zealand.<sup>48</sup> Haast's decision to stay in Christchurch marks a resolve that was a long time in the making. In Canterbury, Haast had achieved what he always desired in his life: he lived in a free and open society, he had a good paying job that he enjoyed as a geologist, he had a family and a home; he could express himself artistically, musically and intellectually; he could step out of his house and seek adventure and pursue the mysteries of creation without affecting the delicate balance of everything else he cherished. Everything Haast had ever worked for or dreamed of would stay within his reach if he could remain in Christchurch. He would not have liked risking any of it in exchange for the mere security of another paying job.

Of course, it was prudent for Haast to keep communication with other potential employers open, but he made a calculated decision by not seriously considering moving on after the completion of the geological survey in 1868. What was Haast counting on to provide an income for his family and what was it in Christchurch that caused him to rule out moving on? Hindsight makes clear the fact that Haast's next paying job and the one that would occupy him for the rest of his life would be that of Director of the Canterbury Museum, but when he made the decision to stay in Christchurch there was not yet a museum nor a curator's job. If he was counting on the eventuation of such a position becoming available to him after completing his contract, then he was counting on more than anything that could be

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 537.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 572.

guaranteed. It is, therefore, likely that Haast was aware of the potential and likelihood of such a development based on information he would have been given by friends and supporters who were in positions to know and assure him.

Haast finally had his museum. According to von Haast's version of the history of the Canterbury Museum, these events occurred mainly because of Haast's efforts. Because he remained so focussed on the role that his father played, he was unable to interpret any of the events in a larger context. In fact, it was impossible for him to have done so, for much of what made the development of the Canterbury Museum possible lay beyond the shores of New Zealand.

In her book, *Cathedrals of Science: the Development of Colonial Natural History Museums During the Late Nineteenth Century*, Susan Sheets-Pyenson examines how natural history museums evolved in colonial cities in various parts of the world during the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup> She observes that natural history collections developed and expanded around the world in the late nineteenth century at such a rate that by 1910 there were at least 2000 of them. The most widely recognised of these institutions were raised up in the metropolitan centres of Europe and America, but Sheets-Pyenson has made the natural history museums that emerged on the colonial frontier the focus of her study. She has chosen the museums built in Melbourne, Christchurch, Montreal and Buenos Aires as case studies for their 'particularly fertile environments for museum building.'<sup>50</sup>

By looking at Julius Haast and the Canterbury museum in comparison with other colonial museums and in relation to the museums at the metropolitan centres, she is able to answer questions that von Haast could not with his father so central to

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<sup>49</sup> See also Susan Sheets-Pyenson, 'How to "Grow" a Natural History Museum: the Building of Colonial Collections, 1850-1900,' *Archives of Natural History* 15 (1988), pp. 121-147

<sup>50</sup> Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science: The Development of Colonial Natural History Museums During the Late Nineteenth Century* (Kingston and Montreal, 1988), pp. 4, 21

his account. The growth of colonial museums in the second half of the nineteenth century was closely related to the growth of colonial science.<sup>51</sup> Von Haast did not miss this, but his view was, and rightly so, that the growth of colonial science in Canterbury was related to Julius Haast. Another factor explaining the growth of museums in New Zealand that Sheets-Pyenson observes is that ‘public-spirited and energetic citizens’ contributed to their success and inter-provincial rivalry influenced funding.<sup>52</sup> Where she leaves von Haast behind is in her finding ‘Colonial museums flourished...only as long as the museum movement prospered elsewhere.’<sup>53</sup> After the turn of the twentieth century, colonial museums throughout the world began to lose the popularity and funding they had worked so hard to achieve. There are a range social, political and economic reasons that can explain this worldwide phenomenon, but it should be noted especially that the enthusiasm and support that brought so much success and growth to the Canterbury Museum in the second half of the nineteenth century also created a perpetual demand on future generations for resources and money. Museums at the metropolitan centres had to respond to the changing trends in scientific development, economic restraints and political situations. Colonial museums would have to change, too, but it took a long time for them to respond and adapt.<sup>54</sup> Heinrich von Haast’s indictment of the people of Canterbury for allowing his father’s ‘Monument, the Canterbury Museum, to moulder away,’<sup>55</sup> is heartfelt, but he failed to recognise the fact that the museum as his father created it could not exist in perpetuity. It, too, would have to allow itself, time and again, to be recreated in order to serve the needs of its public.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-15

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 18, 97

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 101

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-102

<sup>55</sup> von Haast, p. 974

## Chapter 6

### **The Significance of Julius Haast**

What, then, is historically significant about Julius Haast? The immigrant aspects of his life are not unique. He figures prominently in any study that is interested in German scientists who have worked in New Zealand, but many Europeans settled in New Zealand and contributed to the growth and development of the colony. His contributions to the advancement of science are important elements in the larger study of the history of science; his work in the areas of geology, glaciology and zoology are regarded as important, but many nineteenth-century figures accomplished as much. As founding Director of the Canterbury Museum, his role is essential in the telling of its history. The Canterbury Museum stands to this day as one of Canterbury's treasured cultural and educational institutions; it is regarded as Haast's lasting monument, but every great museum has a history that can be traced back to a few dedicated and hard-working people.

In the sense that history must account for the persons who made contributions to the institutions that are important to society, Julius Haast is significant for having played a role. He accomplished much in his lifetime and much of what he did was pioneer work. He did not, however, find a cure for a disease, neither did he lead a people to freedom and he never introduced a single idea that changed the way people live their lives. It is difficult, then, to say that Julius Haast is historically significant without making some sort of judgement as to the degree of that significance.

This study has thus far revealed two aspects of Haast's life beyond the antiquarian substance of Heinrich von Haast's voluminous account: first, he was a product of an early nineteenth-century German culture and socio-political climate and

secondly, his goals and achievements were cleverly woven into the fabric of a developing province. Haast gave the impression that he accomplished many great things single-handedly, but in reality he was part of a much bigger picture. From this new vantage point it is recognised that Julius Haast represents a difficulty in New Zealand historiography. More has been written about him than most notable figures in nineteenth-century New Zealand, yet the general population of present-day students who benefit from access to the Canterbury Museum knows almost nothing about him. There is no requirement in the curriculum of the New Zealand school system to acknowledge him. Indeed, there is no requirement to cover any aspect of New Zealand's Provincial Government history.

There are, however, many people who delight in knowing quite a lot about Julius Haast. *Friends of the Canterbury Museum* is a volunteer organization whose purpose is to foster support and awareness for the ongoing activities of the museum. Their love for the Canterbury Museum has ensured a continuing interest in the life of the museum's founder and first director. Students of geology have likewise kept his memory alive since so much of his pioneer work is at least touched upon in their studies. Four 'prizes' in Haast's name have been established for the advancement of learning in the area of geological science.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Haast is significant in that he occupies a place of importance in the ongoing work of institutions that are still active in culture and higher learning.

That being the case, why is there such disparity in public remembrance between what can be known about Julius Haast and what is actually known? Did Heinrich von Haast not write his book with the purpose of ensuring that subsequent generations would remember his father, what he did and what he left to them?

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Julius von Haast Prizes in Geology and Engineering Geology, University of Canterbury, College of Science, Department of Geological Sciences.

Ironically, von Haast is largely to blame for the fact that historians have for so long left the subject of his father alone. When *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast* was published, Alan Mulgan noted its value to scientific researchers, but he also predicted that such an ‘unwieldy and non-selective’ book would generate little popular appeal and be too expensive.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Mulgan was correct in his prediction, after all, who reads such a thing? In one of the book’s more favourable reviews, an author wrote, ‘It is however a great pity that the work was not condensed or, alternatively, produced as two volumes—twelve hundred large pages makes a volume that almost demands a lectern for comfortable reading!’<sup>3</sup>

Heinrich von Haast’s first miscalculation was to believe that he could provide all the information necessary for a full appreciation of his father’s life and work. What he did was effectively put to a halt any further exploration on the subject. Until recently, historians have gone no further than to quote from von Haast in their research of areas that include Julius Haast. His second miscalculation was to believe that he could possibly have the last word in dealing with the criticism directed at his father. Julius Haast lived with criticism and there is no evidence that he travailed over it more than any other public servant or governmental department head of his time. While Julius Haast was resting peacefully in his grave his son dug up every detail of every criticism, debate, misunderstanding and dispute associated with his career and brought them back to life. Although he set about his task in reaction to how he felt about what he believed others thought about his father, von Haast did not anticipate the reaction that his book would trigger among a new generation of critics.

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Mulgan, ‘The Writing of New Zealand History and Biography,’ Second Lecture to W.E.A., June 1950, quoted in Molloy, pp. 31-2.

<sup>3</sup> Review of *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast*, by H. F. von Haast, *Geographical Journal*, vol. 114, no. 1/3 (July-September 1949), p. 94.



Plate 6



Heinrich Ferdinand von Haast, circa 1933.

Alexander Turnbull Library, 1/2-043510-F.

Not only did von Haast believe that the country was forgetting what his father did, he was aware that there was still some resentment over what some people did remember. In the third issue of *Navigators and Explorers* (1938), John Pascoe, by then a noted mountaineering adventurer and writer, made some comments about Haast's naming of so many mountains after Germans and referred to the names on the map as 'guttural legacies.'<sup>4</sup> Heinrich von Haast was first among those who took offence at what appeared to be an anti-German sentiment. What followed was an exchange of letters that ultimately accomplished nothing other than to add to von Haast's determination to defend everything his father did. Included in his book is a detailed account of every name Haast gave to land features in New Zealand. In the chapter entitled 'Haast's Nomenclature' he wrote, 'Believing with Hochstetter that Science knows no frontiers, he placed upon the map of New Zealand the names of the world's representative scientists irrespective of their nationalities: English, French, German, Swiss, Austrian, American, Australian and New Zealand.'<sup>5</sup>

Heinrich von Haast did not have the last say. *The Press* invited Pascoe to write a review of the new book. Pascoe regarded the biography as the product of a son whose affection was too obvious and lacking in 'judicial detachment.'<sup>6</sup> As Pascoe was reaching the height of his popularity as a writer, the publication of von Haast's book created a watershed in terms of a public that was impressionable. Those who read von Haast's book were likely to accept the view that Julius Haast was a great man. Those who picked up Pascoe's increasingly popular adventure books, such as *Explorers and Travellers*, would be introduced to the alternative view that Julius Haast was less worthy of acclaim. As New Zealand's pre-eminent mountain man,

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<sup>4</sup> Chris Maclean, *John Pascoe*, (Nelson, 2003), pp. 108-9.

<sup>5</sup> von Haast, p. 975.

<sup>6</sup> John Pascoe, review of *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast*, by Heinrich von Haast, *Press*, 2 October 1948, p. 3.

Pascoe had the advantage of influencing public perceptions of historical figures by publishing books that had popular appeal. They were practically the opposite of von Haast's daunting tome. The twentieth-century New Zealander enjoyed Pascoe's adventure books wherein he championed those lesser-known explorers such as John Turnbull Thomson, of whom Pascoe wrote, 'gave names to features that were later changed by Haast, who had a genius for taking credit for other people's work.'<sup>7</sup>

Pascoe, rather than serving as a balance to von Haast's overly appreciative account, only offers the polarised alternative view. While his brief attacks on Haast's character are undoubtedly read more than von Haast's book, the popular nature of his books carries little weight in academia. Consequently, scholarship regarding the significance of Julius Haast is behind schedule. During Haast's lifetime, the reality of political processes forced men to choose sides over such issues as how to go about building a museum in the civic centre of Canterbury. Heinrich von Haast went about his task by taking those early rivalries personally, carrying old debates into his own time and again choosing sides. John Pascoe likewise jumped into the fray and further obscured Haast's historical significance by choosing to play the part of devil's advocate and dispute von Haast's claims. Only recently have scholars begun to look at the historical record without regard to the insular views of early biographers and objectors.

With the emergence of scholarship such as that which has been cited in this thesis (vis. Sheets-Pyenson, Barton and Burrows) there comes a new appreciation for the life and work of Julius Haast, free of the entanglements of filial affection or antagonistic preconceptions.

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<sup>7</sup> John Pascoe, *Explorers and Travellers: Early Expeditions in New Zealand*, (Wellington, 1971), p. 82

What research is beginning to reveal is that Julius Haast was a contributor to many significant aspects of the nineteenth-century. He played an important part in the development of the Canterbury Museum, but the significance of that is not in what he did, but the fact that his actions figured into a much larger picture in which natural history museums were seen growing up all over the world. Haast wrote a great body of scientific material that was important to the advancement of science, but again, what is significant about that is not how much he accomplished, but how what he did figured into the greater body of scientific knowledge. What Haast contributed may now be superseded, offering nothing to the understanding today of, say, glacial geology; however, his reports and records (i.e. maps, drawings and measurements) serve to this day as a benchmark that can be measured against current data. It is such aspects of his work that can be historically significant and he is attached to that significance.

One of the problems with von Haast's interpretation is his view that Julius Haast was indispensable to the progress of Canterbury, the establishment of the Philosophical Institute (later the Canterbury Chapter of the Royal Society of New Zealand), the development of the Canterbury Museum and higher education in Christchurch. Each of these areas of Canterbury's development would have proceeded even if Haast had never come to New Zealand. In focusing so narrowly on his father and much of the time viewing the Provincial Government as an obstacle to Haast's progressive work, he failed to give an accurate account of the overall picture. In reality, the geological survey was an instrumentality of the Provincial Government and Haast was an employee. Ultimate responsibility, and thus ownership and liability, belonged to the government. Haast understood this. True, he pushed for

more immediate results and he appeared to have an agenda of his own, but he was aware of the restraints behind which he had to work.<sup>8</sup>

If von Haast gave too much credit to his father for the progress of the province, then critics like Pascoe have too readily focused their grievances on him as well. Haast may have benefited in name and reputation from the work he carried out on behalf of the Provincial Government, but he was not the author of its policies. Pascoe advocated a little more recognition for explorers whose work he believed Haast ran roughshod over the top of. His sharp criticism of Haast was in response mainly to von Haast's claims that his father was the great achiever. In countering von Haast's claims, Pascoe, too, fails to acknowledge the bureaucracy that empowered Haast to put names to land features and draw the maps that have become permanent and official.

Julius Haast knew that the geological survey and his scientific research were important. He also knew that his work would be of great interest to scientists in other parts of the world and he did not mind receiving recognition for it. He sought and received many honours, but he was also paid for his work by the province and the museum's Board of Governors. Other than what can be considered the typical murmurings and frustrations of a public servant, there is no evidence that Julius Haast thought he was unappreciated as emphasised by von Haast. In fact, as Tessa Molloy writes, 'Among his biographers, only his son seems to have noted the bitterness and disappointment that [opposition in the Provincial Council] engendered.'<sup>9</sup>

Heinrich von Haast wrote *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast* because he thought his father should be remembered for his many achievements; because men

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<sup>8</sup> Julius Haast to the Superintendent, Christchurch, 18 June 1861; Haast to Secretary for Public Works, 25 June 1867. For example, Haast always considered the collections in his charge to be the property of the Provincial Government and he knew that he served at the pleasure of the Provincial Superintendent with the approval of the Council.

<sup>9</sup> Molloy, p. 27.

like Pascoe needed to be chastised for their anti-German prejudices; because he believed the Canterbury Museum was neglected due to a lack of respect for his father's work. In other words, he wrote the book for himself. Julius Haast did many things in his own interest, but he did not take steps to ensure his own memory. Julius Haast died in 1887 and did so without regard for what people in the next century thought of him. He wrote volumes, but he did not leave anything like a journal or memoir for posterity. What he did write, such as his addresses to the Philosophical Institute recounting the histories of the Institute and the Canterbury Museum, was intended for the benefit of his contemporaries. Rather than let his father slip into relative obscurity, Heinrich von Haast transferred his own 'bitterness and disappointment' to his father and brought him back to life in his book, fighting—from page to page—his way to greatness.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

The most important factor of any study of an historical figure is context. All the historical facts concerning Julius Haast, set out in chronological order, can tell us much about what he did, when he did it, even how he did it, but those facts do not explain why he did it. Without a context that includes background and a larger view of the social, political and economic forces that were in effect, what will follow is an interpretation void of meaning. The purpose of doing history is to gain an understanding of how past events are meaningful to people today. Heinrich von Haast interpreted the events of his father's life in a way that was meaningful to him. It was important for him to know that his father did many great things and in telling others about those deeds, he fulfilled his own need to acknowledge his father. Students of history today are not satisfied with von Haast's interpretation because its meaning does not fulfil our requirement to find out something about what place Haast occupied in a past society that is important to us. We are more interested in why geology was important to the development of the Province of Canterbury than the many facts that Haast reported on in his survey. We are more interested in the significance of natural history museums within the cultural context of nineteenth-century colonial society than the hours Haast spent articulating and exchanging moa bones.

Julius Haast, the geologist, museum builder, husband, father, neighbour and friend, is better understood in light of his European background. He came to New Zealand from an environment that can be compared and contrasted to his new surroundings. His associations, some of which were formed before he arrived in New

Zealand, were important factors in the socialisation process by which he worked his way into becoming a permanent member of Canterbury society.

Haast's professional success in New Zealand can be explained by a succession of events that, within the context of his associations (i.e. being German and being a Freemason) and the needs of provincial governments, ultimately led to his permanent employment as Director of the Canterbury Museum. Furthermore, his desire to remain in Canterbury, have a family and be actively involved in the development of society, explain the importance of the work he accomplished above and beyond what was required by his employers.

There were many aspects to Haast's life in New Zealand that can be seen as significant when it is revealed to what extent he played a part in the areas of science and institutions that are currently of interest to people. Today, historians rarely look to great men in hopes of finding answers to the question of what is meaningful. Rather, in looking at the institutions whose histories tell us something about ourselves, they find important people who made contributions that are significant. In Canterbury, we have found that we can only learn so much about our museum by reading the book written by Heinrich von Haast about a great man. What we are finding to be more meaningful is that we can look to our great museum in order to learn something about the man. Museum enthusiasts, historians, scientists, geologists, even artists, will come across Julius Haast in their own researches. When they do, they will see him in context, they will see what is meaningful and they will tell us what is significant.

Heinrich von Haast's *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast* will continue to be a great source for people who are interested in Julius Haast. What will become



more common, however, is its being referenced in research on other topics in which the significance of Haast's influence becomes apparent.

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#### C. Thesis

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## Appendix 1.

## List of Institutions and Persons to Whom Julius Haast Wished to Send His Nelson Report:

Royal Society, London  
 Geological Society, London  
 Zoological Society, London  
 Royal Geographical Society, London  
 Linnean Society, London  
 Professor James Forbes, F.R.S., Edinburgh  
 The British Museum, London  
 Athenaeum Club, London  
 Editor, *The Times*, London  
 Editor, *Saturday Review*, London  
 Museum of Economic Geology, London  
 Trinity College, Dublin  
 Bodleian Library, Oxford  
 E. Selwyn, Government Geologist, Melbourne  
 Dr Ferdinand Mueller, Director, Botanical Gardens, Melbourne  
 k. k. Geographische Gesellschaft, Vienna  
 Geological Society, Paris  
 Geographical Society, Paris  
 Imperial Geographical Society, St Petersburg  
 Scientific Society, New York  
 Scientific Society, Sydney  
 Gasellschaft für Erdkunde, Berlin  
 Dr A. Petermann, Gotha, Saxony  
 Sir Roderick Murchison, Director-General, Geological Society of Britain  
 Sir Charles Lyle, F.R.S.  
 Professor Richard Owen, F.R.S.  
 Dr Charles Darwin, F.R.S.  
 Sir George Grey, Cape of Good Hope  
 Dr E. T. Gray, British Museum  
 Sir William Denison, Sydney  
 Sir Charles Nicholson, Sydney  
 Rev W. B. Clarke, M.A., Sydney  
 Professor F. von Hochstetter, Polytechnic Institute, Vienna  
 Dr Hooker, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew  
 Professor C. F. Naumann, Leipzig  
 Dr Julius Friedleben, Frankfurt  
 Professor H. Burmeister, Halle  
 Mr J. Arrowsmith, London  
 Mr Keith Johnstone, Edinburgh  
 Mr T. W. Doyne, C.E., Sydney

## Appendix 2

[Undated]

To The Honourable The Provincial Council of Canterbury now assembled

The memorial of the undersigned offices and members of council of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury

Respectfully sheweth that our memorialists have learned with great satisfaction that it is in contemplation to provide additional accommodation for the provincial museum—

That the great number of objects of interest which are at present being covered up for want of room and the numerous additions which are now expected by Dr Haast from Europe, America and other quarters renders such increased accommodation peculiarly desirable.

That the members of the Philosophical Institute besides voting several sums of money for the use of the museum, and especially devoting one third of their yearly income to the support of the museum or of a public library in connection with it, will always be prepared to assist in enlarging the public collection of specific objects and in seeing to their proper arrangement.

That while your memorialists frankly recognise the peculiar exigencies of the present period of very general depression they nevertheless regard the establishment of the museum as a work of immediate public importance both for the advancement of trust that your honourable council will take such steps as may be judged most effectual for securing so desirable an object.

John W. S. Coward Hon. Treasurer  
 T. Nottidge, Member of Council  
 G. Packe, Member of Council  
 C. Davie  
 James S Turnbull V.P.  
 E. Dobson V.P.  
 Charles Fraser Honorary Secretary